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Edited by Sir John Hammerton

SIXPENCE FEBRUARY 19, 1943

**GOOD LUCK, AUSSIES!** Gen. Sir Thomas Blamey, C.-in-C. Allied Forces, Australia, gives these cheerful "Diggers" a cordial send-off as they set out on their journey for the New Guinea front. They were among the first Australian soldiers to reach the battlefield by air; and, as the enemy was soon to know to his cost, they have given a splendid account of themselves in the Papuan fighting.

*Photo, Sport & General*

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# THE BATTLE FRONTS

*by* Maj.-Gen. Sir Charles Gwynn, K.C.B., D.S.O.

DURING the last half of January 1943 the situation of the Axis continued to deteriorate at a pace that compelled German propaganda for home consumption to switch from reassurances to threats. Events have also outrun expectations of commentators on the Allied side. Possibly they were anxious to avoid accusations of wishful thinking, but up to the time Paulus was offered terms of surrender the possibility or even the probability that his encircled army might hold out till relieved in the spring was discussed. A general slowing up if not a complete arrest of the Russian offensive was expected. In Africa, too, it was thought that the capture of Tripoli would prove a difficult undertaking even if Rommel were not strong enough to risk decisive battle. How over-cautious such views were is now apparent. Paulus' army has been wiped out. Far from being brought to a standstill, the Red Army continues to go from success to success, to open new fronts of attack and threaten the German line at its most vulnerable points. The Germans admit that their front must be shortened, but it will be under compulsion and to avoid, if possible, further catastrophes—not as a deliberate, well-planned strategic operation. It will have to be carried out under the most difficult weather conditions and at a time when railway communications, already over-taxed, have the additional task of replacing vast quantities of lost material.

In Africa Alexander has brought the Libyan campaign to a triumphant conclusion and is ready with the 8th Army to play his part in Tunisia.

**COL.-GEN. KONSTANTIN ROKOSSOVSKY, commander of the Russian forces on the Don front which compelled the capitulation of the German 6th Army. He began the war as a colonel, and even now is only 38.**
*Photo, Pictorial Press*

**RUSSIA** Since I last wrote announcements of Russian victories have followed each other with bewildering rapidity. Here are some of the main events of the last half of January, approximately in chronological order:

The relief of Leningrad; the capture of Kamensk, giving a bridgehead across the Donetz; exploitation of the break-through south of Voronezh, leading to the capture of Valuiki and other towns on yet another railway of vital importance to the Germans on the front covering Kharkov; on the Caucasus front the capture of Voroshilovsk and Armavir—where it was thought the army retreating from the Terek Valley might stand in order to cover the Maikop oil-fields and the communications of the force operating across the Caucasus towards Tuapse; the opening of railway communications through Stalingrad as a result of the progressive annihilation of Paulus' army; the crossing of the lower Manych and the capture of Salsk, followed by a two-pronged advance along the railways leading to Rostov, and to the vital railway junction of Tikhoretsk; the advance of the Russians from Tuapse in pursuit of a retreating enemy and the re-occupation of the Maikop oil-fields; the continued pursuit of the Germans from Armavir and Voroshilovsk, leading to the capture of the important railway junction at Kropotkin; and, finally, the great break-through at Voronezh with the capture of the strong hedgehog town of Kastornaya on the direct line of approach to the still more important bastion of Kursk; to be followed in the south by the capture of Tikhoretsk and the occupation of Maikop.

**RUSSIAN GAINS ON SOUTHERN FRONT. Arrows show the principal Russian thrusts at Feb. 1, while the lines showing the front at that date, a fortnight earlier, and before the beginning of the Russian counter-attack last November, demonstrate the complete reversal of fortune in this field of war.** *By Courtesy of the Times*

THAT is an amazing record of successes spread over an immense front, but what are their chief strategic implications? Cumulatively they imply a threat to the whole of the great salient formed by the German front south of Kursk.

To examine them in detail from south to north: The German armies of the Caucasus, estimated to amount to 250,000 men, are in immediate danger. Two groups, those from the Terek Valley in the east and from Tuapse in the south, are in full retreat, abandoning vast quantities of material and having heavy losses. The line of retreat of the former group towards Rostov has been cut by the drive from Salsk which has captured Tikhoretsk. Some elements may have extricated themselves before the town was taken, but a great part of the force appears doomed to annihilation. The main line of communication of the Tuapse and Maikop group, which ran through Armavir, has already been cut, and the only way of escape open to it is by cross-country roads through mountainous districts to Krasnodar. In winter, retreat by this route would be very difficult and entail the abandonment of all heavy equipment.

AT the western end of the Caucasus the Germans appear still to be holding their position from Krasnodar and Novorossisk—the lower Kuban here gives them a defensive position facing south. They have brought up reserves to hold a bridgehead east of Rostov on the railway to Salsk, and are trying to stop the Russian advance on that line by counter-attacks. Whether they will attempt to link up with Krasnodar as a rallying position for the troops retreating from the east is still not clear; but it seems more probable that they will be compelled to fall back to a line much closer to Rostov because they are threatened by converging attacks from the directions of Salsk, Kropotkin and Tikhoretsk, all of which will now have good railway communications. Many troops and heavy weapons will also be released by the annihilation of the Paulus army to reinforce the drive from Salsk.

A small bridgehead may be established east and south of Rostov, but it seems inevitable that the whole of the Caucasus will have to be abandoned, and that a great part of the army that has been operating there

**VELIKI LUKI, important railway junction on the Russian Central front, was re-occupied by the Soviet forces on Jan. 1, 1943. The scene of fierce street fighting, the town was reduced to ruins before the German garrison was finally overcome. This radioed photo shows the Soviet flag flying in triumph above a scene of devestation.** *Photo, Planet News*

will be lost, together with enormous quantities of material and equipment.

North of the Don the Germans are still trying desperately to hold the line of the Donetz, but the Russians have secured footholds across it; moreover, having now control of the railways from Stalingrad and Voronezh, their communications have been greatly improved and reinforcements from Stalingrad will also be available. Meanwhile, farther north, the progress of the Russian drive south of Voronezh threatens to cut the communication between Kharkov and the Donetz and is approaching the Upper Donetz. The Donetz basin, in fact, seems likely to become a dangerous salient under attack from three directions. There is therefore a possibility, though it is still remote, that the shortening of the front, of which the German people have been warned, envisages a withdrawal from the Donetz when everything has been done to save the armies of the Caucasus.

MEANWHILE, the success of the breakthrough at Voronezh has produced another critical situation. It will mean further heavy demands on German reserves, and it threatens to interrupt the railway from Kursk to Kharkov, which is one of the main lateral routes by which reserves can be moved. Moreover, this thrust has proved once again that the Russians are now capable of breaking through the most strongly defended positions and that hedgehog towns are liable to prove traps rather than defensive assets.

In the centre and north there has been no great change since the capture of Veliki Luki and the relief of Leningrad, but at both of these points dangers threaten which tie up German reserves.

The German soldier continues to fight hard, but he cannot, after a series of disasters and retreats, be the man he was when full of confidence. The numbers of prisoners captured may be symptomatic of some loss of morale. The satellite armies, which have for so long served a useful purpose, have almost ceased to exist, and such remnants as remain can have little military value. Will the Germans be able to replace their immense losses? They may by superhuman exertions replace material and fill up their depleted ranks with young and partly-trained men. But they cannot make good the loss of fully trained and war-experienced men, especially officers and non-commissioned officers.

Apart from victories gained, territory recovered and railway communications reopened must immensely improve the Russian situation. But, on the whole, the best reason for optimism is the new standard of tactical efficiency now manifest in the Red Army.

## NORTH AFRICA

The sound of the pipes in Tripoli gave cheering proof that the last page of the last chapter of the history of the Libyan campaigns had been reached.

For all-round brilliancy it would be difficult to find an equal of Alexander's campaign. With all three services pulling their weight, and with the administration organization performing as brilliantly as the fighting forces, it was a wonderful exhibition of team work of the highest order.

Rommel, if he hoped to throw Montgomery out of his stride at Zem-Zem, was disappointed, and the resistance offered by his rearguard there did practically nothing to delay the advance of the 8th Army and cost him casualties. Thereafter, he relied mainly on mines to slow down pursuit which has now reached the Tunisian frontier.

Will Rommel attempt to bar the advance of the 8th Army into Tunisia either on the Mareth Line or at the Gabès defile? That he will hold one or both as strong rearguard positions is practically certain; and, as at Zem-Zem, Montgomery, before attacking, will probably have to pause to close up his army, reconnoitre and get his supply services well established. The time required to make the port of Tripoli reasonably usable is likely to affect the development of the situation. I find it hard to believe, however, that the Germans will attempt to hold Southern Tunisia permanently. It would mean spreading their troops over a very wide area and the maintenance of a much larger force than their precarious sea communications could be relied on to keep fully supplied. Moreover, the defensive Mareth and Gabès positions would be exposed to attack from both front and rear.

IT seems more probable, therefore, that they will concentrate on holding the more important northern half of the country. Rommel certainly may stand in the south till Montgomery is in a position to attack, and he may be reinforced there in the hopes that an attempt to interpose on his line of retreat might offer an opportunity for one of his characteristic counter-strokes. Axis reports indicate that an American army is threatening to interpose, and Rommel may believe that an inexperienced army may offer opportunities which the experienced 8th Army never presented.

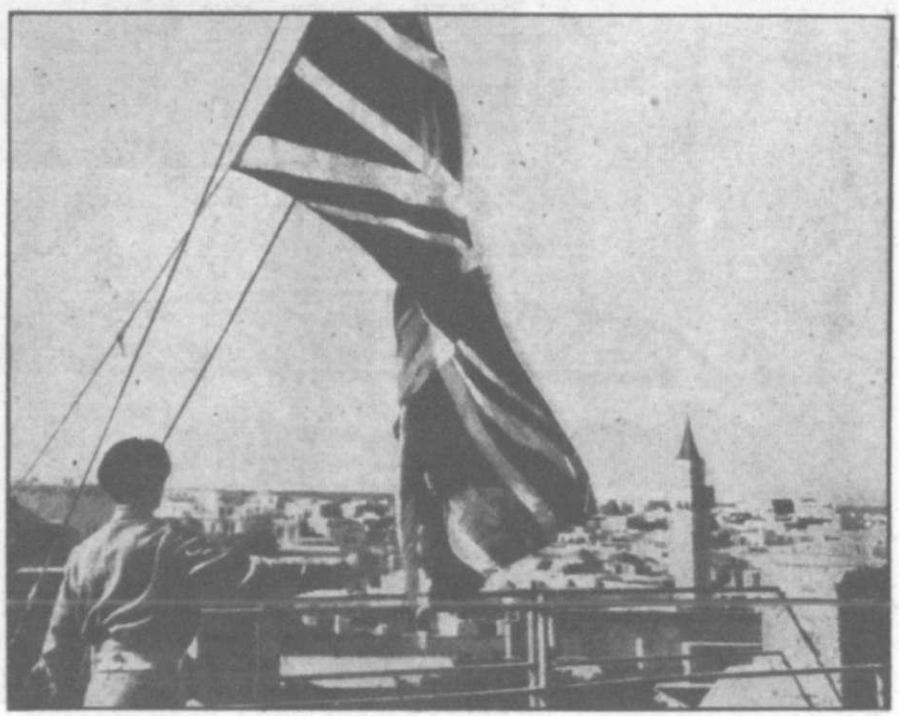
On the whole, however, the situation in Tunisia is full of uncertainties and is veiled by secrecy. Yet it is not unreasonable to believe, with the situation in Russia going from bad to worse, that the Germans will try to keep their commitments in Africa to the minimum which will meet their main object of keeping the Sicilian Channel closed to our convoys.

## THE FAR EAST

With the final extermination of the Japanese in Papua operations for the time being are almost exclusively confined to air attacks on advanced Japanese bases. The Papuan operations afforded a convincing proof of what white men can accomplish in the most trying tropical surroundings and weather. It was a desperate test of courage and endurance brilliantly passed.

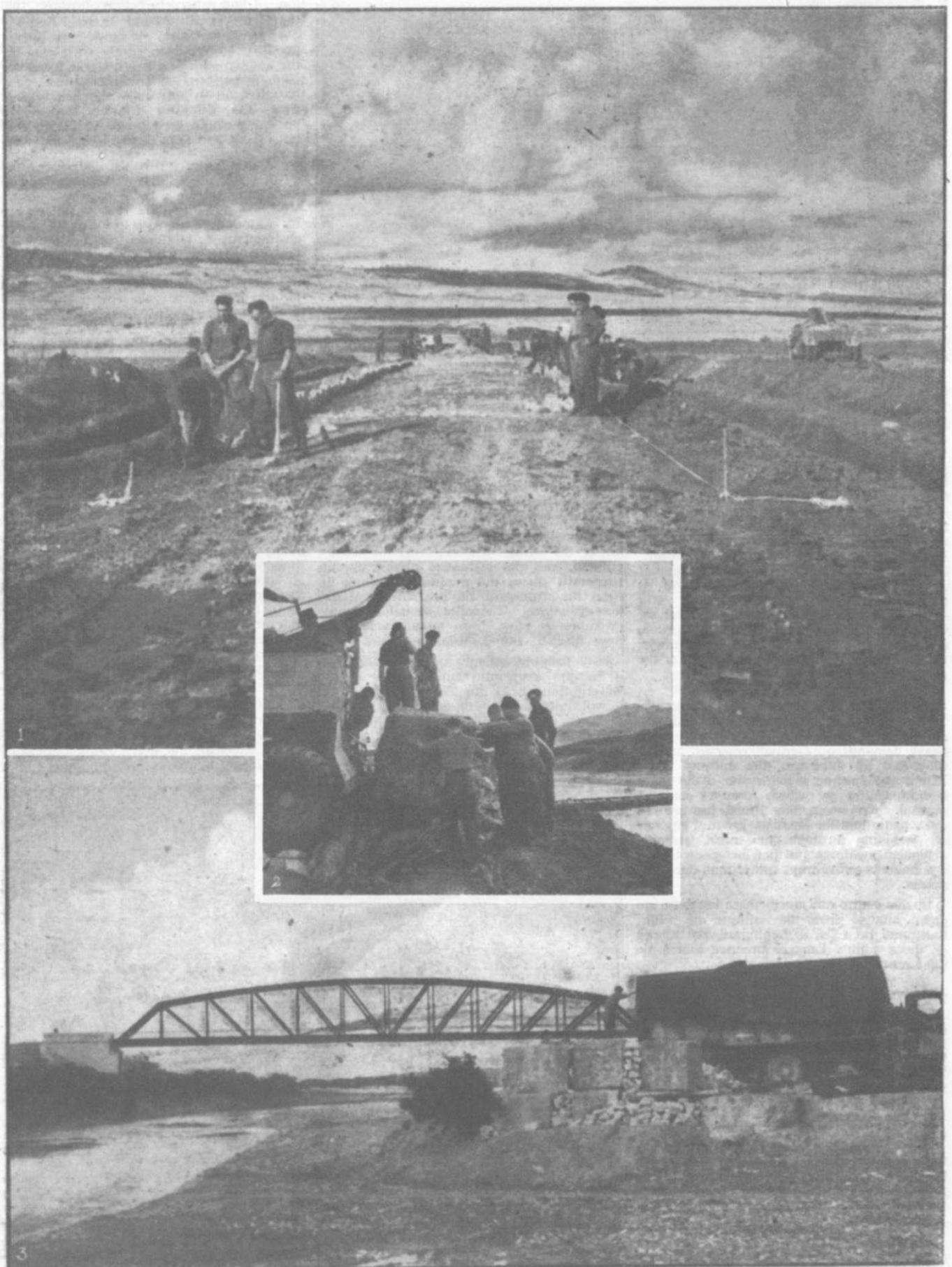
In Guadalcanal the Americans are extending their area of occupation and by degrees mopping up the remaining Japanese.

What the assembling of a large Japanese convoy in the more northern islands means is not yet clear, but it is costing the enemy heavy losses in aircraft and shipping.



**UNION JACK FLIES OVER TRIPOLI. On Jan. 23, 1943 two Lanarkshire men of the Eighth Army, Sgt. D. Grant and Pte. W. Clark—both Gordon Highlanders—proudly hoisted the British flag from a fort that overlooked the harbour of Tripoli. The following day it was announced that the Eighth Army was driving in pursuit of Rommel.**

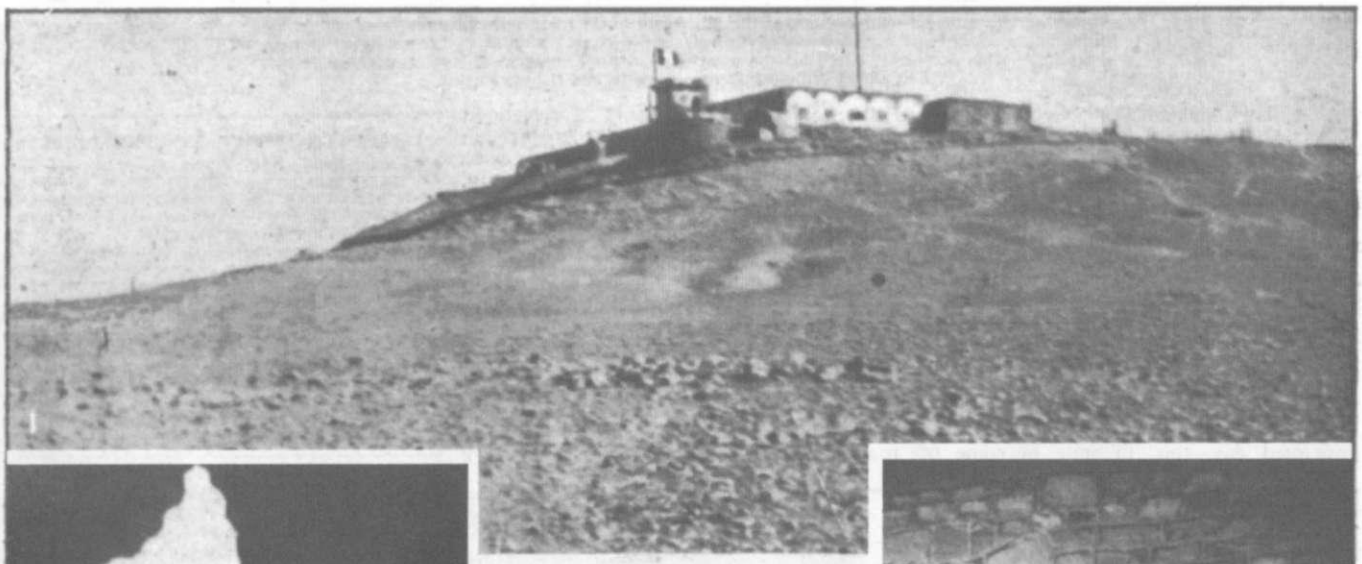
# Paving the Way for Victory in North Africa

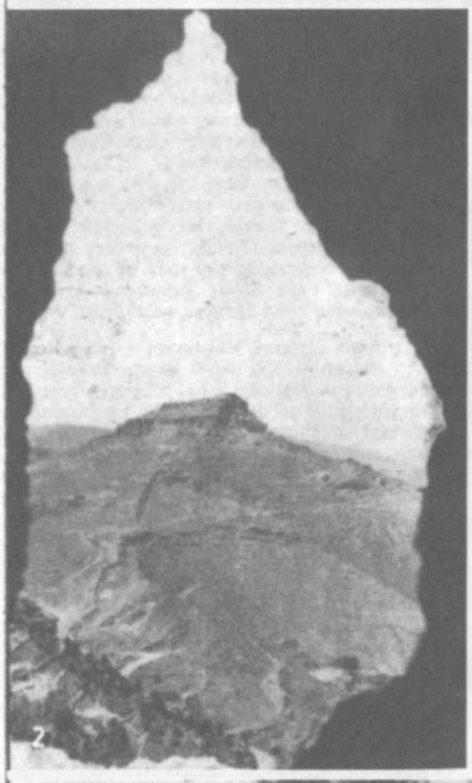


**ROYAL ENGINEERS IN TUNISIA** have been busily constructing new roads and bridges for the needs of the First Army and of our Allies. 1, Men of the R.E.s at work on a road intended for military transport. 2, A mobile crane is employed in bridge-building operations to place concrete base blocks in position. 3, The bridge is here shown almost completed. It is 130 ft. in length. A bridge over the River Medjerda, with its two approach roads, was built by the sappers in 4 days.

*Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright*

# Just What and Where Is the Mareth Line?

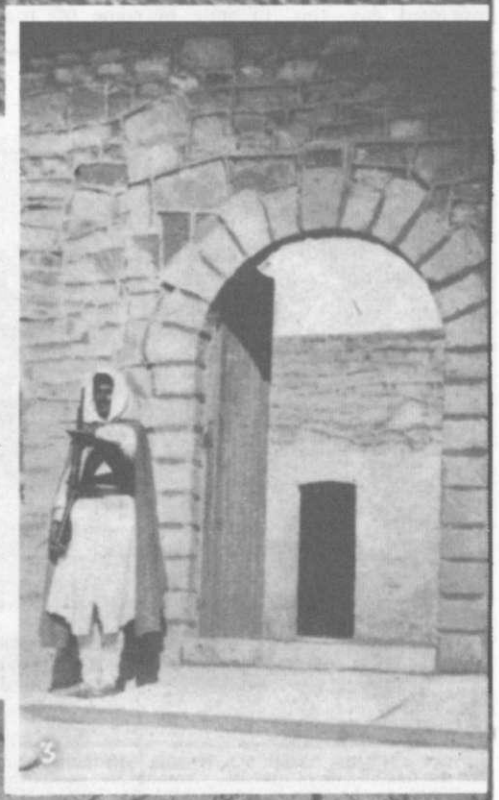


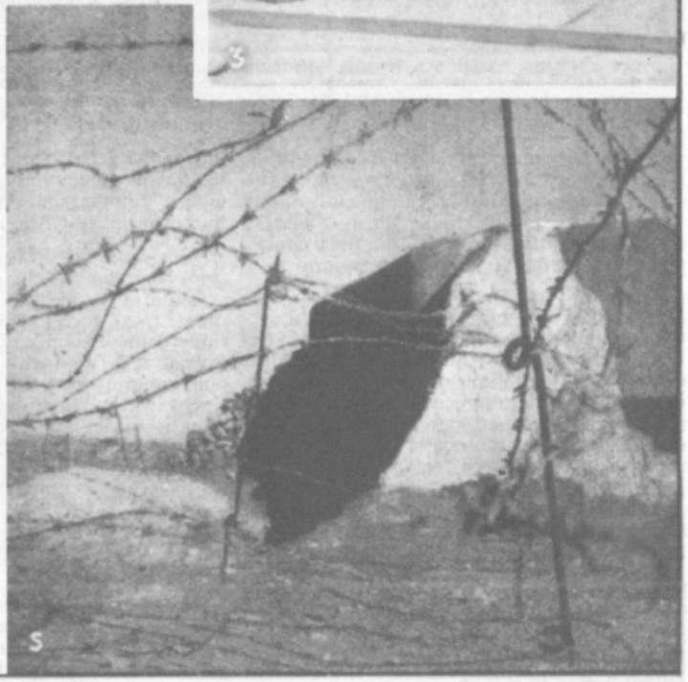


IN 1938, when Mussolini threatened to occupy Tunis, the French constructed the Mareth Line. Running for 30 miles from the Mediterranean to the Matmata Hills in S. Tunisia, these defences take their name from Mareth, an inland village which forms the pivot of the whole line. Built on the pattern of the Maginot, the Mareth defences consist of three lines, each with a series of fortresses cut into the desert rock or built of reinforced concrete. Underground sleeping quarters, guns which can be lowered out of sight, telephones, underground water supplies drawn from the Mareth Oasis are some of the most important features of this Tunisian Maginot.

The defences stretch for a depth of from nine to ten miles, filling in the whole of the gap between the hills and sea. In 1940 Vichy agreed to dismantle them, but to what extent demilitarization was carried out it is impossible to tell.

It is estimated that 40,000 men are needed to take over the defences at full strength. The only good road from Tripoli to the S. Tunisian plain runs through the Mareth Line. The photographs in this page were taken in 1938, when the defences had just been completed.





**STRONG POINTS OF THE MARETH LINE.** 1, The Le Bœuf redoubt, a typical example of a Mareth fort. 2, Military roads link the chain of small forts that stretch across the rocky Matmata plain. This photo was taken from a hill-cave. 3, A native soldier guards the imposing entrance the post of Djenein. 4, French tanks assembled outside a village. 5, One of the innumerable pill-boxes in the defence zone seen through barbed wire entanglements.



*Photos, New York Times Photos; Keystone; E.N.A.*

# Into Tripoli Montgomery Marched in Triumph

Crowning the splendid achievement of the 8th Army in its 1,400-mile advance from within the Egyptian frontier was the capture of Tripoli, last surviving capital of Mussolini's "Roman Empire." This account is based for the most part on the dispatches of Reuters correspondents, Eric Lloyd Williams, George Crawley and Dennis Martin.

As dawn was breaking General Montgomery stood on the Gebel heights and watched his victorious troops stream down the precipitous mountain roads into the streets of Tripoli, last remaining city of Italy's once extensive colonial empire. It was a great moment, the crowning achievement of a magnificent piece of generalship. From the very beginning of the campaign Rommel had been hopelessly outgeneraled, his men outfought. Before the offensive was launched, war correspondents at the 8th Army's H.Q. were told that Tripoli would be in Allied hands on January 22; and sure enough, the British columns were outside Tripoli before nightfall on the appointed day—this, in spite of some of "the wildest-ever advance." He pictured British tanks and gun columns racing through a vast wilderness of hills and deep, wide ravines looking like mountains of the moon. One minute they would be seen going across a flat tableland covered with black basalt rocks; the next, the whole column would disappear. You would not see it again until you came to the steep edge of some wadi; and there, with the leading tank many miles away, just dust in a mirage of distorted distance, you would see the column picking its way through a great ravine. So they went on, bouncing along across wide rocky plains, then creeping through basalt-dotted hills, descending into sand-filled wadis where no road had ever been made, churning along

### MONTGOMERY TO HIS MEN

LEADING units of the Eighth Army are now only about 200 miles from Tripoli. Tripoli is the only town in the Italian empire oversea still remaining in their possession. Therefore, we will take it from them; they will then have no oversea empire.

The enemy will try to stop us; but if every one of us, whether a front line soldier or an officer or man whose duty is performed in other spheres, puts his whole heart and soul into this next contest, then nothing can stop us.

Nothing has stopped us since the Battle of Egypt began on October 23, 1942. Nothing will stop us now. Some must stay back to begin with, but we shall all be in the hunt eventually.

**On to Tripoli! Our friends in the home country will be thrilled when they hear we have captured that place.**—*Jan. 12, 1943.*

**FIRST BRITISH TANK TO ENTER TRIPOLI—a Valentine—is here seen being admired by some of the inhabitants of the city. Among the men of the victorious Eighth Army who are riding in triumph on the tank is the piper of the Gordon Highlanders, who piped the tanks through the city.** **See also p. 551.**
*Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright*

the heaviest going in North Africa—while behind them streamed a great caravanserai of trucks, carrying hospital equipment, water, food, shells, repair units, bridge-builders, tank-recovery units, and all the other equipment needed for running a modern army.

The 8th Army's final advance on the doomed city was made from three directions: two columns of armoured units and New Zealanders charged through the desert to the south, while the infantry, the Highlanders of the 51st Division, mopped up along the coast road. No minefields were found in the desert, but along the coast road the enemy used his old rearguard tactics of mines and booby-traps. Every conceivable device was adopted to delay the advance; every culvert and bridge was demolished and the road surface was pitted with holes blown in by the retreating enemy. Armed resistance, however, was slight. The last engagement with Rommel's panzers before the city's fall was fought at Azizia, a few miles to the south, when the crack 7th Armoured Division were in action.

It was an amazing performance. Eric Lloyd Williams of Reuters, who was with one of the armoured columns, described it as through the great seas of sand until finally they climbed up through the tumbled peaks of the Tripolitanian mountain ridge guarding the town on the Mediterranean shore.

GATHERED in their three columns in the fields surrounding the city walls, the British assault troops awaited General Montgomery's order to advance. When this was given, the three columns converged and moved on the town. This was at 5 a.m. on January 23. One column came from the east; a second force, which had streamed down the mountain pass the night before along the road from Tarhuna, moved in from the south; the third column rumbled in through the western gate.

Just after six a.m. on Saturday, January 23, reported Alexander Clifford of The Daily Mail, when the eastern sky was still only faintly pale with dawn, a British tank called Dorothy (after the driver's sweetheart in Liverpool) clattered into the main square. Seven Gordon Highlanders and a sapper clung to the tank as it felt its way cautiously through the still streets. But the first British troops to scout the city were a patrol of 11th Hussars who were nosing up into the southern suburbs as early as 4 a.m., and an hour and a half later drove in through the streets and out again. "If anybody deserves the honour of being first into Tripoli," wrote Clifford, "it was these Hussars, who have been so long in the desert that they glory in the nickname of 'the Desert Rats.' The Gordon Highlanders, then, were the first infantry in. Dorothy was the first tank. Seaforth Highlanders, who fought so gallantly at El Alamein, singing machine-gunners of the Middlesex Regiment, and men of the Buffs—the Royal East Kent Regiment—and the Queens—the West Surreys—followed."

AT noon General Montgomery, standing in the sun at the Porto Benito cross-roads just without the city wall, officially received the surrender of the city. To him, standing between an interpreter and one of his brigadiers, approached the Lord Mayor of Tripoli; Commandatore San Marco, Vice-Governor of Libya; and the Prefect. The Italians were in full uniform, glittering with medals; Montgomery made an interesting contrast, in his battledress, tank beret and two sweaters of different colours. The delegates listened carefully to his demands, said Mr. Clifford. "The Vice-Governor's nose twitched once or twice as though he wanted to blow it, but didn't quite like to. Then they all turned and frowned. But at the end they had no questions to ask." Commissariat and police were to remain Italian responsibilities, said the General. "There's a very big population here. I have nothing against the civilian population, provided it remains orderly. My war is against the Italian and German armies." At the same time he uttered a stern warning against any treachery or espionage.

As General Montgomery with his senior commanders entered the town, Arab and Italian civilians lined the streets and cheered. Before them marched British infantry to the skirl of the Highlanders' bagpipes, and the General took the salute in the main square. Then as column after column of British troops swept by, the Union Jack was broken at the masthead over Tripoli Town Hall. A few hours later General Montgomery spoke to the correspondents. "I have nothing but praise for the men of the 8th Army," he said, "they have done what I expected of them."

In the city itself there was never a sign of resistance, few signs even of hostility to the conquerors. But in the harbour area the effects of repeated pounding by the R.A.F. were plentiful. Wrecked ships dotted the bay and the warehouses lay in ruins.

Soon life in Tripoli was back almost to normal. Shops began to open, and the hotels filled up with military personnel. In the square the citizens listened with growing appreciation to the roll of drums, the strange music of the pipes.

# The Roman Wolf Hears the Conqueror's Pipes

**FUNERAL MARCH OF THE ITALIAN EMPIRE.** On Jan. 23, 1943 Tripoli was entered by the Eighth Army. Marching behind their Pipers to the accompaniment of their famous battle tune—Cock o' the North—these men of the Gordon Highlanders are seen in the chief city of Mussolini's now vanished African empire. In the background lies the harbour, dominated by the monument of the wolf which, in ancient legend, nourished Romulus and Remus, the founders of the Roman state.



*Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright*

# THE WAR AT SEA

*by* **Francis E. McMurtrie**

NEWS was received at the end of January 1943 of the supersession of the supreme Chief of the German Navy, Admiral Raeder, by one of his subordinates, Admiral Doenitz. Previously the latter had been in charge of the Nazi submarine service.

Whatever the underlying reasons for this change, it is obvious that, like the wholesale dismissal of German generals each time the Army fails to achieve its objects, it is designed to provide a scapegoat under the gospel that the Fuehrer himself is infallible.

Probably the immediate cause of Raeder's downfall, though he has doubtless been slipping from favour for some time past, was the failure of the German fleet to stop British convoys getting through to North Russia. Without the arms and munitions that have poured in by this route, it is improbable that the Soviet armies could have accomplished a tithe of what they have done recently. Apart from this, there is reason to suppose that Hitler is by no means satisfied with the progress of the submarine campaign. Though fantastic figures have been broadcast by Berlin of the alleged sinkings of shipping by U-boats, the fact that the Allies were able to land their armies in North Africa with such small opposition must have been a bitter disappointment to the enemy.

It is of course quite possible that Raeder showed himself to be a lukewarm supporter of the submarine as the principal naval weapon. In pre-war days he strongly advocated the sending out of surface raiders to prey upon commerce. His belief in this method of attacking seaborne trade has been shown by the persistency with which heavily armed ships of mercantile type have been let loose on to the trade routes, to say nothing of the Graf Spee's ignominious end and the loss of the Bismarck. Several of the mercantile type raiders also failed to return, such as the Atlantis, sunk by H.M.S. Devonshire on November 22, 1941; the Kormoran, sunk in action with H.M.A.S. Sydney in the same month; the Pinguin, sunk by H.M.S. Cornwall in May 1941; one sunk by H.M.S. Dorsetshire in December 1941; and yet another which was recently reported to have been destroyed by U.S. Naval forces in the South Atlantic.

Raeder himself is understood to have said that he was relieved of his duties at his own request, "on account of the state of his health." That excuse is unlikely to deceive anyone who has studied Hitler's methods of dispensing with the services of those who do not satisfy him.

DOENITZ, in an order of the day to the German Navy, stated that he will continue in personal charge of U-boat operations. He must call for "unconditional obedience, supreme courage and sacrifice," he concluded. This may be taken as further evidence that in the coming spring a supreme effort to sink more shipping will be made by the Axis submarine flotillas.

It is now clear that in a broadcast ten days earlier the Nazi authorities were leading up to Doenitz's new appointment. It was then announced that he had "established a wireless network across the ocean to track Allied convoys," adding that the submarine war against shipping "is first and foremost in the mind of Admiral Doenitz." This, in view of what has since happened, sounds as though Raeder were being blamed for not devoting more attention to submarine warfare. According to enemy reports, Doenitz recently went as far as Madagascar in a submarine, in order to confer there with the Chief of the Japanese Naval Staff.

### TRIPOLI'S Importance as a British Naval Base in the Mediterranean.

What effect will the occupation of the port of Tripoli have on the battle for Tunisia? This must depend to some extent on the time it takes to clear the harbour of wrecks and to repair the damaged moles. From experience at Benghazi, it is evident that this can be done much more rapidly than the enemy supposed when the work of blocking and demolition was executed.

Once in working order, the port can be used freely by our supply vessels, which will relieve the long land lines of communication of the Eighth Army of much of the task of keeping it reinforced, fed and munitioned. Moreover, cruisers, destroyers and smaller craft of the Mediterranean Fleet will be able to use Tripoli as a base from which to attack the seaborne supplies of the Axis armies in Tunisia. Already those supplies have been suffering from the incessant attacks of our submarines and aircraft, the former based on Malta. Recently the enemy have made increasing use of schooners, which can creep along the coast unobserved after making the crossing from Sicily by night. Not only are they less conspicuous targets than bigger ships, but to lose one is a less serious matter in the present depleted state of Italian shipping.

A foretaste of what is to come was given at the beginning of December 1942, when British cruisers and destroyers under Rear-Admiral C. H. J. Harcourt sank four supply ships and two escorting destroyers in a smart action. With Tripoli available as a base, operations of this kind will be much easier to carry out; and the Royal Navy can be trusted to miss no opportunity of striking. In time shortage of supplies must gradually weaken the enemy in Tunisia to an extent which will render his defeat inevitable.

**REAR-ADM. D. W. BOYD, whose appointment as Fifth Sea Lord, with the additional title of Chief of Naval Air Equipment, was announced on Jan. 22, 1943. He commanded the aircraft-carrier Illustrious at Taranto in 1940, and was given command of an aircraft-carrier squadron in 1941.** *Photo, Associated Press*

**ADM. DOENITZ, appointed C.-in-C. of the German Navy in place of Adm. Raeder on Jan. 30, 1943. Hitherto chief of Hitler's U-boat Command, he was a U-boat commander in the last war.** *Photo, Sport & General*

The Admiralty have to be congratulated on their latest appointments in connexion with the Fleet Air Arm. Rear-Admiral Denis W. Boyd, who has had war experience in command of aircraft-carriers, has been appointed Fifth Sea Lord, a post which has been temporarily vacant since Vice-Admiral Lyster went back to sea in the early part of last year. His secondary title, instead of "Chief of Naval Air Services" as in Admiral Lyster's case, is "Chief of Naval Air Equipment."

CAPTAIN R. H. PORTAL, hitherto Director of the Air Division of the Naval Staff at the Admiralty, becomes Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff (Air), with acting rank of Rear-Admiral. Though he will not himself be a member of the Board of Admiralty, he will be responsible to the Chief and Vice Chief of the Naval Staff, both of whom are on the Board. Rear-Admiral Portal has had long experience of naval flying, in which he graduated during the last war. He is a younger brother of the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal, no inconsiderable asset when it is remembered how often the two Services have to co-operate. Admiral Sir Frederic Dreyer, who has been Chief of Naval Air Services at the Admiralty since the departure of Vice-Admiral Lyster, will continue his good work with the new designation of Deputy Chief of Naval Air Equipment. The post of Assistant Chief of Naval Air Services, hitherto held by Vice-Admiral R. B. Davies, V.C., has been abolished.

This reorganization, together with the news announced by Mr. A. V. Alexander, the First Lord, in an address in London on January 13 of a general speeding-up in the production of new types of aircraft for the Navy, is welcome and timely in view of the need for augmented air defence against U-boat attacks on shipping. Another welcome piece of news released by the First Lord was that the Navy is expecting early delivery from the United States of a number of new dive-bombers.

# They Got the Convoy Safely Through to Malta

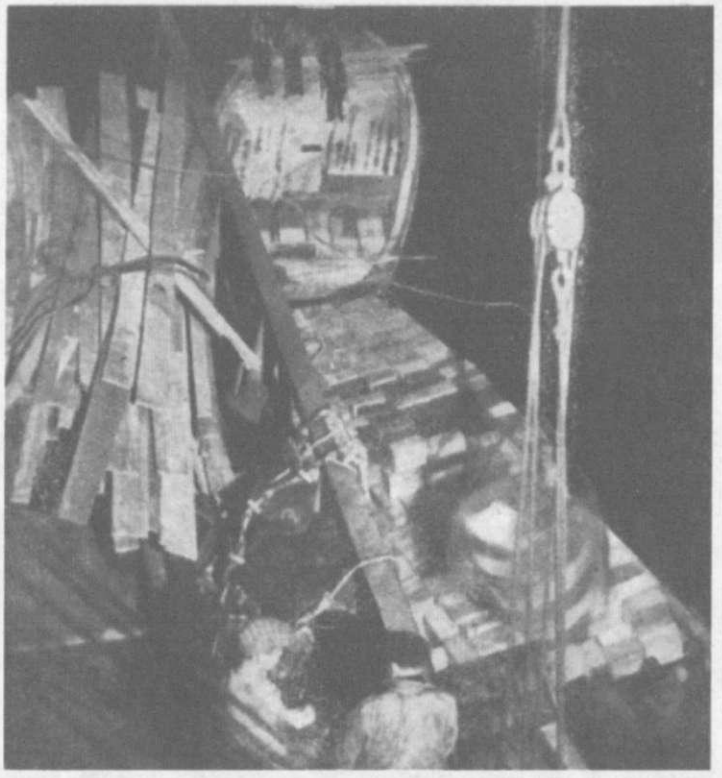
CAPT. C. R. MILL, O.B.E.
His ship destroyed 3 enemy aircraft before being sunk herself.

E. E. HAYES, B.E.M.
Greaser of a torpedoed vessel, he displayed great skill and courage.

F. FOTHERGILL, B.E.M.
His cool and accurate gunfire helped to destroy a U-boat.

C. R. B. GOODMAN, M.B.E.
As 2nd Officer he showed exceptional ability in convoy duties.

CAPT. W. HARRISON, C.B.E.
He handled his vessel with exceptional skill and daring.



J. L. WILLIAMS, M.B.E.
As Fourth Officer he showed outstanding ability and courage.

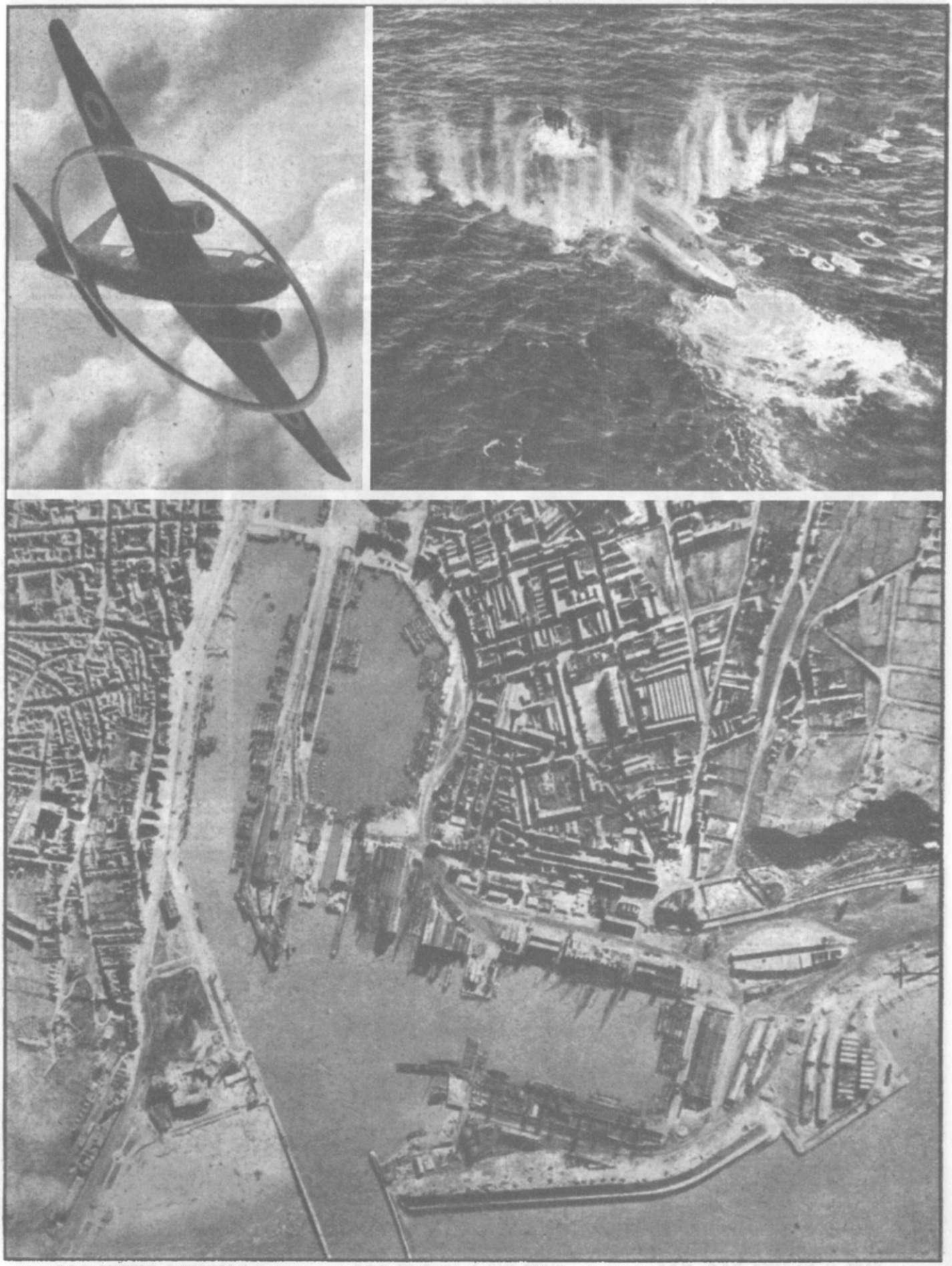
CAPT. H. PINKNEY, D.S.O., M.B.E. CHIEF ENG. L. BENTLEY, D.S.C. 2nd OFFICER R. BETTESS, D.S.C.

Like their fellows of the Merchant Navy whose photographs appear above, these three Mercantile Marine officers helped to defend an important convoy which reached Malta in August 1942. They were among those of the Merchant Navy to win naval honours for the first time in history. Centre, unloading the precious cargo at the docks by night.



*Photos, British Official: L.N.A., Wm. Jr Jones (Malta)*

# Coastal Command Keeps Watch and Ward

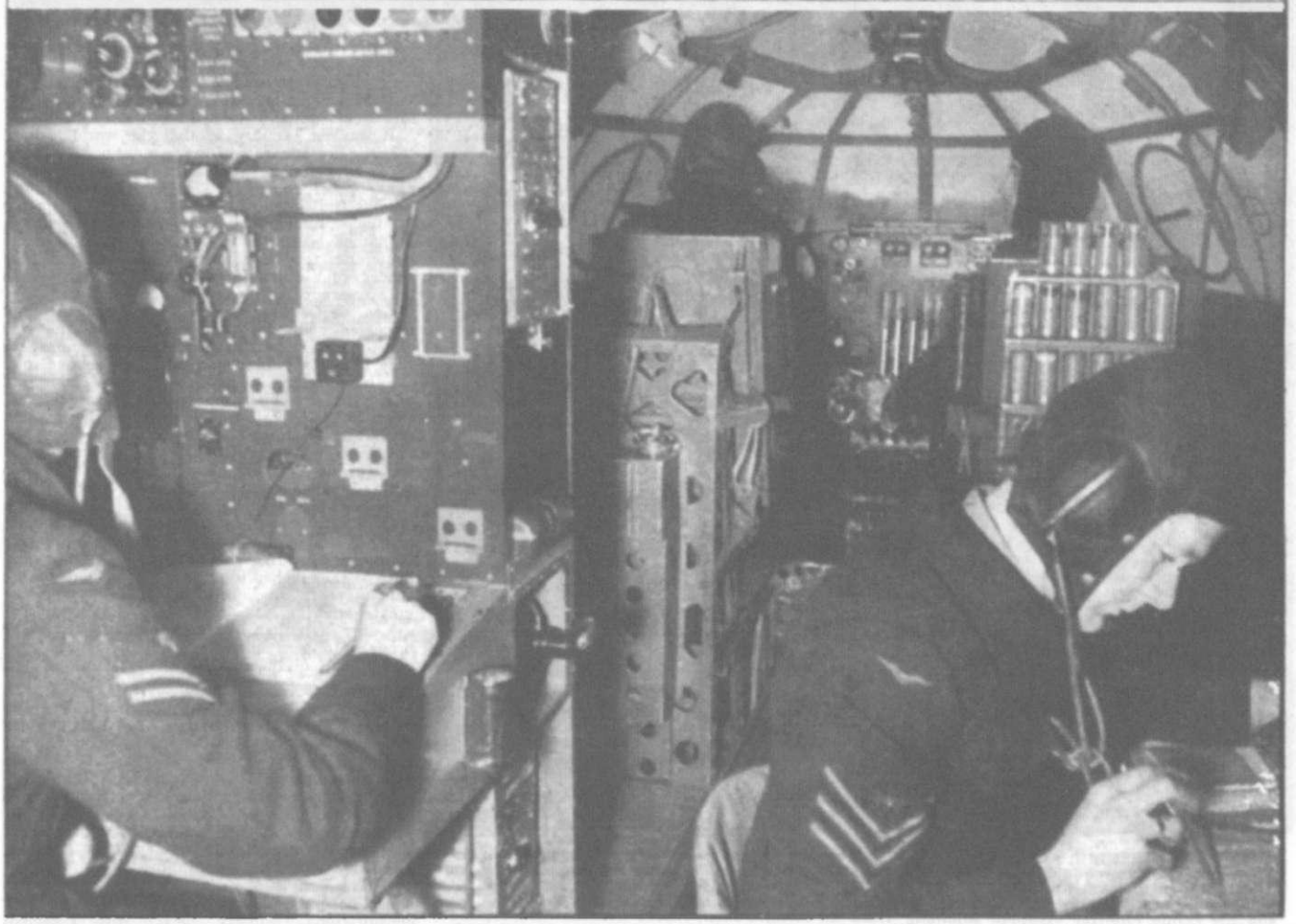


**COASTAL COMMAND 1939-42.** (H.M. Stationery Office, 2s.) Published in Jan. 1943 the Air Ministry account of the work of Coastal Command contains a number of photographs not hitherto released: here are some of them. Top left, Wellington fitted with special attachments for exploding magnetic mines before ships were equipped with degaussing gear. Top right, U-boat under fire from a Sunderland flying-boat. Below, German invasion barges massed in Boulogne harbour in 1940.



*Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright; Fox*

# Great Achievements Recalled by the Camera

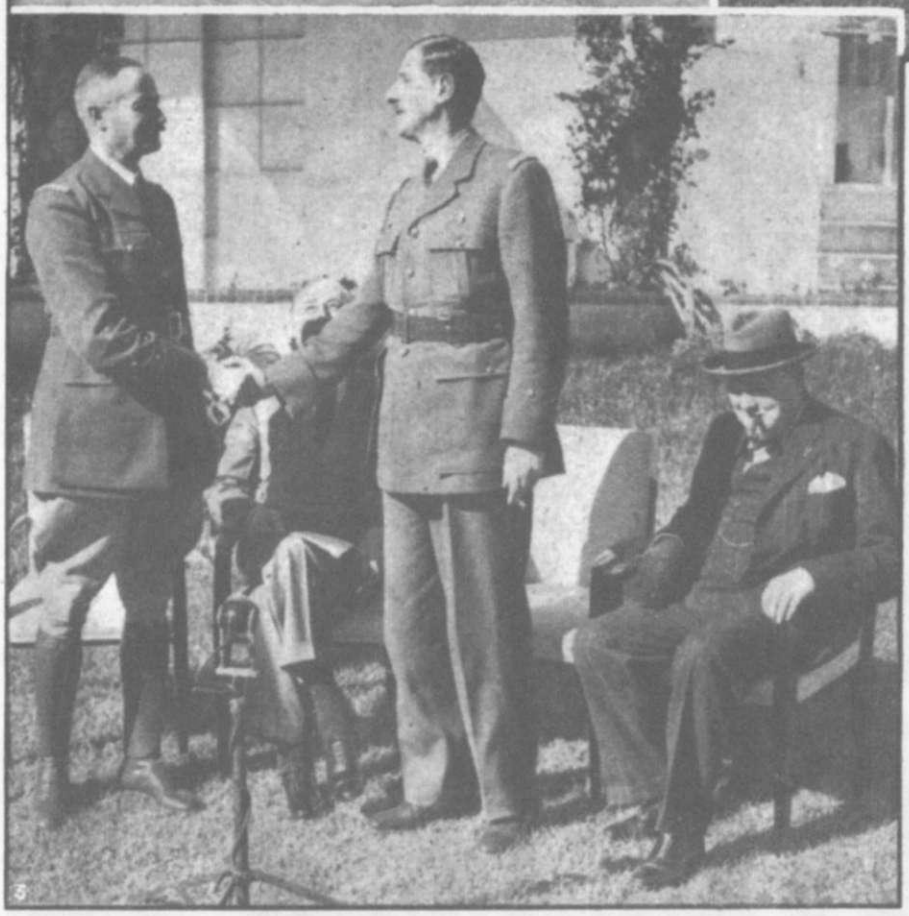


**TRIPLE TASK OF COASTAL COMMAND**, working in cooperation with the Royal Navy, is " to find the enemy ; strike the enemy ; protect our ships." These photographs are some of those included in the recently published Coastal Command, 1939-42. Top, an Anson aircraft maintains vigilant watch over a convoy. Below, the men who do the job—1st and 2nd pilots (background) of a Catalina flying-boat with their navigator (right) and radio operator.



*Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright*

# Premier and President Hold Council of War



**'THIS IS A HISTORIC MOMENT.' For ten days in mid-January 1943 the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom were in conference at Casablanca, French naval base on the Atlantic coast of Morocca. During his stay in N. Africa Mr. Roosevelt visited U.S. troops and (1) shows him seated in a Jeep as he makes his tour of inspection. The President and the Prime Minister occupied adjoining villas at Anfa, a small resort near Casablanca, and (2) they are seen in the garden of a third villa in which their talks were held. Gen. Giraud, High Commissioner for French N. Africa, and Gen. de Gaulle, leader of the Fighting French (3), shake hands in the presence of the two great democratic leaders, who simultaneously exclaimed, "This is a historic moment."** *Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright*

THE Casablanca Conference—the fourth occasion on which Mr. Churchill and President Roosevelt had met since the beginning of the war—may prove to be one of the most momentous events in the history of the present conflict.

It was on January 27 that the world learned that the great leaders of the two nations had been in consultation at Casablanca (whither they had gone by air) since January 14. Great Britain and the United States were thus active participants in the "unconditional surrender" meeting—so named by the American President in a Press conference to denote that the unconditional surrender of Germany, Italy and Japan was the only assurance of future world peace.

Gen. de Gaulle and Gen. Giraud also met and discussed plans for the unification of the war effort of the French Empire; and on January 27 they issued a joint statement. "We have met. We have talked (it read). We have registered our entire agreement on the end to be achieved, which is the liberation of France and the triumph of human liberties by the total defeat of the enemy. This end will be attained by the union in the war of all Frenchmen fighting side by side with all their Allies."

The Conference came at a crucial time for the Axis, and the news of its holding filled the peoples of the United Nations and of the oppressed European countries with renewed hope and assurance as they looked towards the campaigns of the coming year. In London and Washington the great gathering was accepted as a council of war—a sure sign that increased pressure would be brought to bear upon the Axis, involving a concerted plan of the utmost significance.

MR. ROOSEVELT flew 5,000 miles to N. Africa. It was the first time that any President of the United States had left his country during a war, and the first flight made by Mr. Roosevelt since 1932. He flew by Clipper to a point in N. Africa, where he transferred to a four-engined bomber which had been specially fitted out for the journey. On his return journey the President, travelling via Liberia, visited President Vargas of Brazil at Natal, called in at Trinidad, and arrived back in Washington on January 31. Mr. Churchill went from Casablanca to Cairo, when he proceeded to Adana, in Turkey, for consultations (January 30-31) with President Inonu and his ministers. Having paid a brief visit to Cyprus, he returned via Cairo and Tripoli, arriving in London on February 7.

# History in the Making at Casablanca Meeting

"THE President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Great Britain have been in conference near Casablanca since January 14," said a communiqué published on January 27. "They were accompanied," it went on, "by the Combined Chiefs of Staff of the two countries, and a number of other high-ranking officials and officers from both countries. For ten days the Combined Staffs were in constant session, meeting two or three times a day and recording progress at intervals to the President and the Prime Minister. The entire field of war was surveyed—theatre by theatre, throughout the world, and all resources were marshalled for the intense prosecution of the war by sea, land, and air. Nothing like this prolonged discussion between two Allies has ever taken place before.

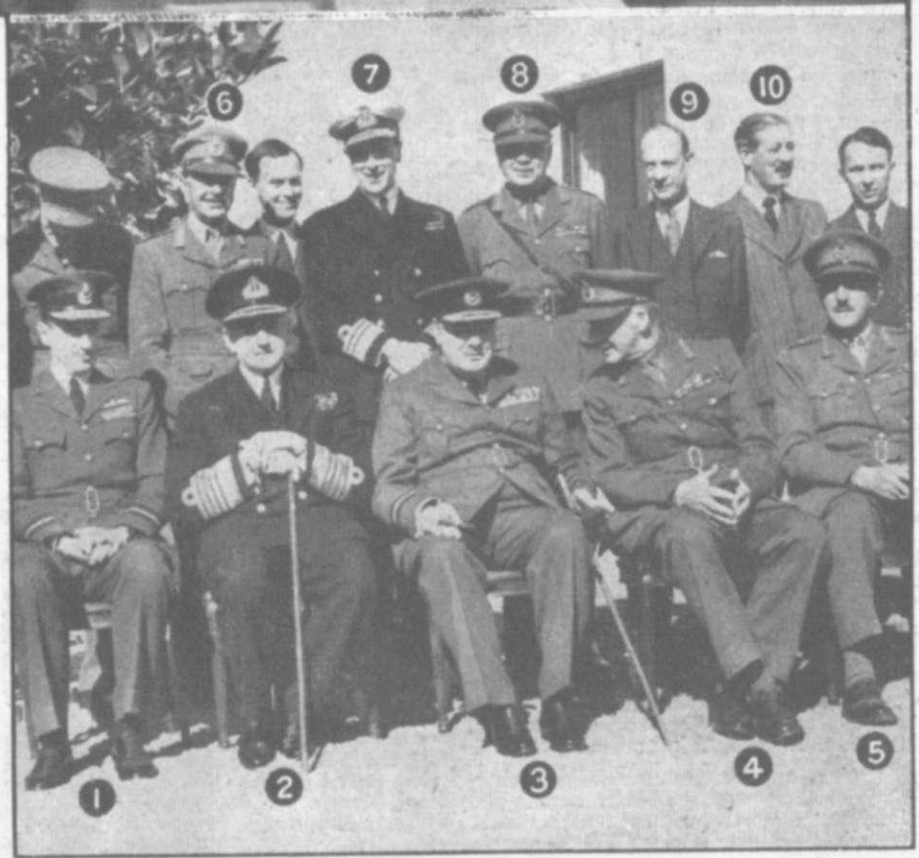
"Complete agreement was reached between the leaders of the two countries and their respective Staffs upon the war plans and enterprises to be undertaken during the campaign in 1943 against Germany, Italy, and Japan, with a view to drawing the utmost advantage from the markedly favourable turn of events at the close of 1942.

"Premier Stalin was cordially invited to meet the President and the Prime Minister, in which case the meeting would have been held very much farther to the east. He is, however, unable to leave Russia at this time on account of the great offensive which he himself as C.-in-C. is directing. The President and Prime Minister realized to the full the enormous weight of the war which Russia is successfully bearing along her whole land front, and their prime object has been to draw as much of the weight as possible off the Russian armies by engaging the enemy as heavily as possible at the best selected points. Premier Stalin has been fully informed of the military proposals.

"The President and the Prime Minister have been in communication with Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. They have apprised him of the measures which they are undertaking to assist him in China's magnificent and unrelaxing struggle . . .

"The occasion of the meeting between the President and the Prime Minister made it opportune to invite Gen. Giraud to confer with the Combined Chiefs of Staff and to arrange for a meeting between him and Gen. de Gaulle . . .

"The President and the Prime Minister and the Combined Staffs, having completed their plans for the offensive campaigns of 1943, have now separated in order to put them into execution."



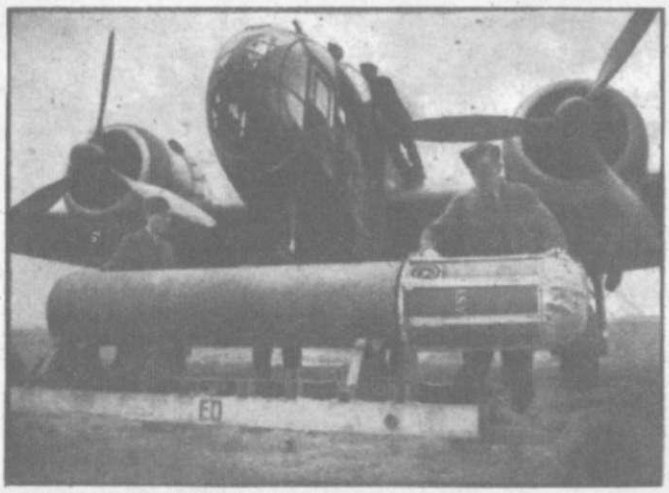

**AT THE CASABLANCA CONFERENCE.** Top photograph, taken at a Chief of Staff conference in the Anfa Hotel, near Casablanca, shows: 1, Adm. E. J. King, C.-in-C., U.S. Navy; 2, Gen. Marshall, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army; 3, Lt.-Gen. Arnold, commanding U.S. Army Air Force 4, Field-Marshal Sir J. Dill, head of British Joint Staff in Washington; 5, Sir. C. Portal, Chief of Air Staff; 6, Gen. Sir A. Brooke, C.I.G.S.; 7, Adm. Sir D. Pound, First Sea Lord; 8, Lord Louis Mountbatten, Chief of Combined Operations. Below, Mr. Churchill (3) is seen with the British representatives. 1, Sir C. Portal; 2, Adm. Sir D. Pound; 4, Field-Marshal Sir J. Dill; 5 Gen. Sir A. Brooke; 6, Gen. Sir H. Alexander; 7, Lord Louis Mountbatten; 8, Maj. Gen. Sir H. Ismay; 9, Lord Leathers; 10, Mr. MacMillan, Resident Minister at Allied H.Q., N. Africa.

*Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright*

# 'Mines Were Laid in Enemy Waters'

Become almost a commonplace in the news bulletins over the past few months, this announcement hides one of the most interesting and one of the quietest offensives of the war—an attack in which the air and naval arms of the United Nations have combined their strength in striking hard blows at the Axis transport system. This article is contributed by J. ALLEN GRAYDON.

THE attacks by Bomber and Fighter Commands upon Germany's transport system have forced the Nazis to utilize more than ever before the coastal ships they constructed before the War. This fleet has been strengthened by the inclusion of craft commandeered from France, Norway, Belgium, Holland and Denmark.



**R.A.F. MINELAYING AIRCRAFT** repeatedly drop mines in enemy waters. This photo was taken at a station from which Canadian and British planes operate. One of the mines is about to be loaded into the waiting Hampden. *Photo, Central Press*

With this coastal fleet at their disposal the Germans hoped to ease their overworked railway system.

But the R.A.F. and Royal Navy, by splendid cooperation, as I have seen for myself, have cut deep into Hitler's reserves of coastal shipping—and the mines they have laid in enemy shipping lanes have played a major part in this success.

In The First Great War the Royal Navy, in four years of war, laid 128,652 mines in enemy waters. Already, in cooperation with Bomber Command, the Senior Service has exceeded this figure. From Norway round to Toulon our minelayers go quietly about their work; and to talk with these men who carry out one of the most secret of our many offensives makes you appreciate all the more the greatness of their achievement.

DURING the course of the last thirteen months Bomber Command, in some cases calling upon the giant Lancasters, Halifaxes and Stirlings, has flown 3,000,000 miles on operations concerned with minelaying. Last month 500 of these "eggs of death," as pilots call them, were dropped in enemy shipping lanes. We have good reason to believe that for every German vessel sunk as the result of mines, the loss of which is made public, yet another is destroyed and kept secret by the Axis authorities. German U-boats, too, slinking close inshore, are reported to have suffered serious damage as the result of hitting British mines.

"I suppose you think minelaying a daredevil job," a young pilot officer, captain of a Lancaster, said to me when I sat in an R.A.F. mess a short time ago. "You're wrong. It's one of the most monotonous jobs in the world. You take your orders from the Admiralty, fly for hours in the dark, reach the 'target area,' drop the mine, then go back home. No thrills. No bangs. Just monotony."

I might add that this young pilot was once caught in the beam of German searchlights on the coast and had his wrist-watch shot off by an enemy night-fighter; yet he kept to his course and "placed" his mines in the spot the Admiralty "brains behind the scenes" had selected.

Even the famed Kiel Canal, and other waters hitherto thought closed to our minelayers, have been "visited" by Bomber Command. In fact, since the R.A.F. and Navy joined hands in this attack our successes have increased day by day.

It is interesting to watch mines being loaded aboard our flying giants. I have seen the "eggs," after being loaded aboard trollies by crane, hauled along by a tractor, driven by a young W.A.A.F., to the machines. Always a naval expert is present to fuse the mines, and to see how closely he works with the R.A.F. ground crews makes you appreciate just how well the Senior and Junior services are working.

The Germans, in their efforts to reduce the efficiency of our aerial minelayers, have introduced night-fighter patrols, together with anti-aircraft ships, to cover their coastal waters. Powerful searchlights have also been mounted, but the minelayers, although the danger has increased, continue to force home their attacks. When I was in Germany just before the War I heard talk of a new "speedboat minesweeper" the Reich Fleet had introduced. Today we know it as the R-boat. It is a speedy vessel and was put into commission to sweep up our mines in the shortest possible time. The German seamen do not relish being drafted on to these craft, but the British mine offensive is causing the Nazi transport system to creak.

Nazi merchantmen and tankers forced out of their normal lanes by our mines have to run the gauntlet of Royal Navy "light coastal forces." Motor torpedo boats, protected by the motor and steam gunboats, as I have seen when out in the English Channel and North Sea, take a terrible toll. During recent months these light forces have destroyed over a score of merchantmen and tankers, and severely damaged forty-five. And the mines forced the Germans, against their wishes, into our trap.

Royal Navy motor launches, under cover of darkness, also play a big part in this most secret war. I have seen them, under cover of darkness, put their bows into the open sea, "slide" quietly into waters close to the enemy, unload their T.N.T., and just as quietly set a course for home. The Germans, knowing the daring of these men, many of whom I found to be members of the R.N.V.R., have strengthened their patrols by including among the armoured trawlers the speedy Schnellbootes, more commonly known as "E-boats." (*See* Haworth diagram of British and German light coastal craft in page 278).

ONE young commanding officer, formerly a solicitor, with whom I have talked, told me how, on one particularly dangerous mission, they passed clean through the middle of a German convoy. Every man aboard the motor launches wanted to fire upon the Hun, but they held their fire while the Germans passed but a few yards away. One German ship passed within twenty yards of a motor launch, and the Germans aboard were so surprised that they could only let off—a rocket! By the time the alarm had been given the British craft were laying their mines. This task completed, they withdrew from the areas and watched the Germans fighting it out among themselves!

On another occasion a rating was injured when a German fighter attacked. But he refused to allow anyone to tend him until the minelaying had been completed. During another "trip" our minelayers were so close to the German-held coast that a sentry, on anti-invasion patrol, hailed them, but fortunately without disastrous results.

Today the enemy, to assist their own surface craft, as well as planes, to locate and destroy British minelayers, have mounted some of the most powerful searchlights in the world in various coastal areas. I have been blinded by those facing Dover, and had the experience of being caught in their beams when in the Straits of Dover. By using them the Hun would appear to think that he will at least keep our minelayers away from his shores.

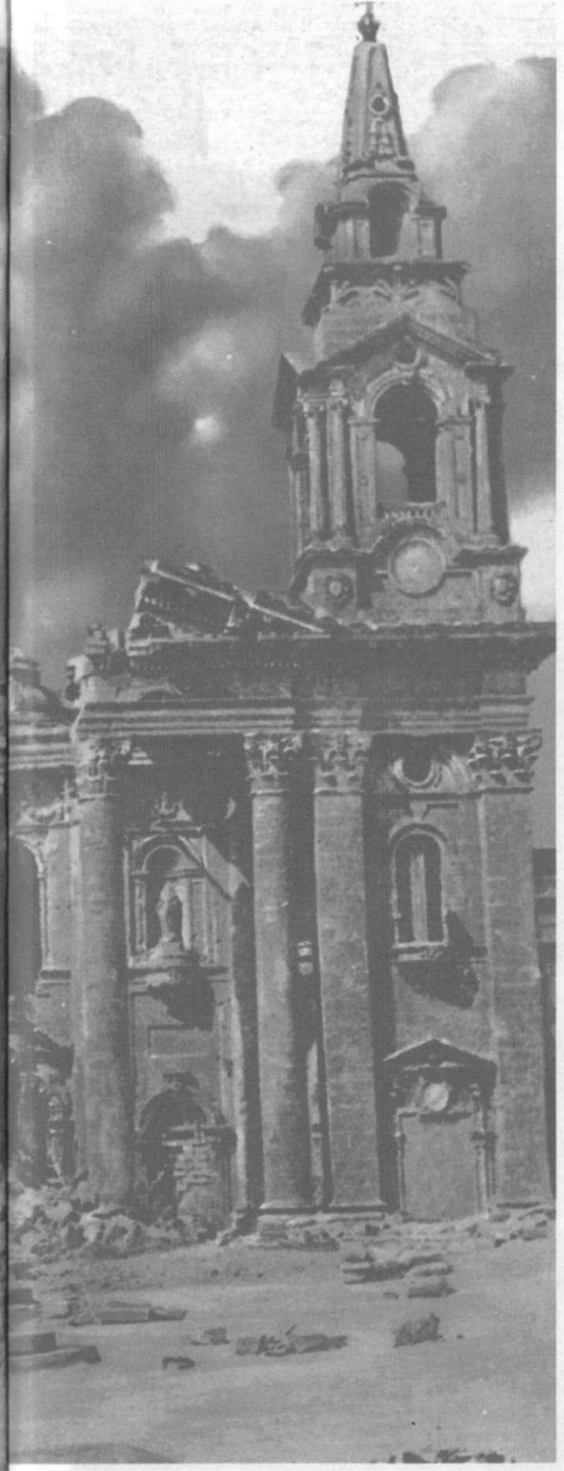
But the men who conduct one of the most important offensives, an attack which must remain for the most part on the "secret list," still take their war into the enemy's shipping lanes—and have given Hitler a headache he cannot shake off!

**M.T.B. CREW LOADING A TORPEDO** into their ship. Motor torpedo boats play a great part in the hazardous work of protecting our coastal waters, and have scored many successes against the enemy *Photo. Central Press*

*Photos, British Official : Crown Copyright*

## *Malta, Island of the George Cross*

Would she, could she, survive ? That was the question asked in the summer of 1940, when Malta was exposed to the full fury of Axis strength in the Mediterranean. Two and a half years have passed, and not Malta but Tripoli has fallen. Always Malta has roared defiance—thanks to her people's gallantry, the R.A.F. and the Royal and Merchant Navies which have kept them supplied with arms and food. Top, convoy on its way ; below, unloading a supply ship in the docks.



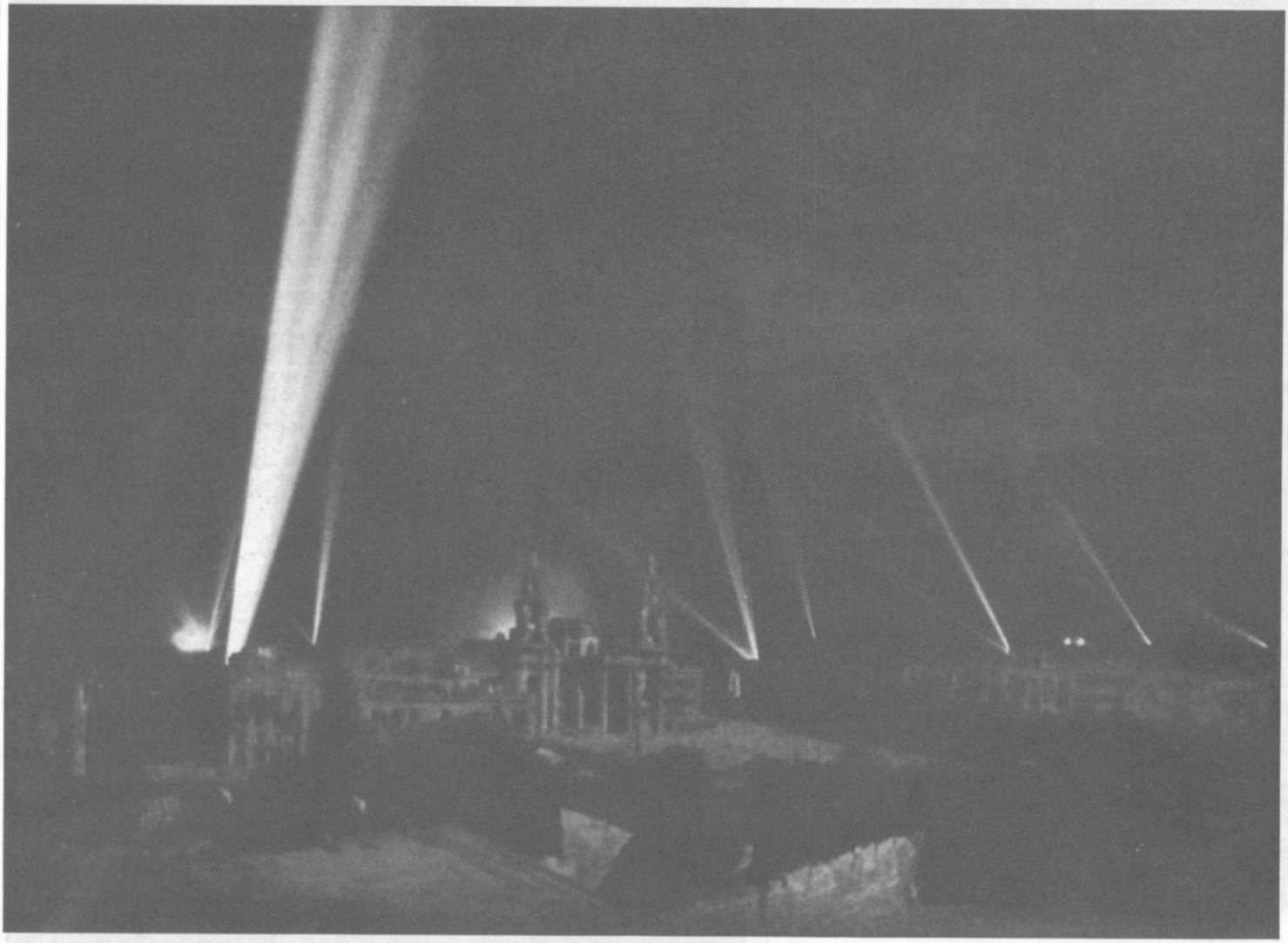
## In the World's Most Bombed Island

Deep in the rocky heart of Malta functions the H.Q. of the island's Command. To the Coastal Defence Room (1) news is flashed of the approach of enemy raiders, and from it the orders proceed to the answering guns and fighters. During 1942 alone Malta's planes and A.A. guns shot down 955 Axis raiders; our photograph (2) shows Maltese children playing amongst the remains of a German bomber.

*Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright, Fox*

## Malta Rises Above the Smoke of Battle

Only twenty minutes' flying time from Axis aerodromes in Sicily, Malta has experienced about 3,000 air raids. Last year the enemy dropped 12,000 tons of bombs on the island, and among the many buildings of historic interest that have been damaged is St. Publius's church in Valetta (3). In St. Julian another bomb has dropped (4), while in (5) we see Maltese folk clearing a pile of rubble.



## 'Unsinkable Aircraft-Carrier' in Action

*Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright*

During 1942 aircraft based on Malta's airfields dropped 1,500 tons of bombs on enemy bases in North Africa and Sicily, while scores of enemy ships were hit with bombs or torpedoes by planes of the R.A.F. and Fleet Air Arm. Top, a naval pilot running to take off in his Hurricane, standing ready and bombed-up on a Malta airfield. Below, searchlights and enemy flares light up the night sky above Floriana cathedral as the island experiences yet another raid.

# UNDER THE SWASTIKA

## Ominous Cracks in the Facade of Hitler's Fortress

In spite of all that Himmler and his Gestapo can do to suppress every whisper, criticism, every symptom of unrest, it is clear that things are far from well in the Nazi world. The article that follows is contributed by Dr. EDGAR STERN RUBARTH, the prominent anti-Nazi German publicist who has previously written in our columns.

HAD Hitler confined his ambitions to the German tribe, to the Germans in the widest possible interpretation of the word, he might have got away with it, as he got away with the tearing up of treaties, rearmament, and the incorporation of Austria and Sudetenland. But his megalomania induced him to attempt the conquest of Europe, even the world ; and in so doing he raised up the opposition which will eventually destroy him.

There are three more or less organized centres of resistance : the military, the holders of material power ; the Churches and social leaders, supporters of tradition ; and the oppressed—the conquered peoples as well as dissident groups within Germany, fighting for their liberty in underground movements. Those comprising the first and second centres went with Hitler part of the way, hoping to use him and his gang for their own ends : the first, in order to regain their old Prussian supremacy and privileges within the State, glory and booty around it ; the second in order to fight Bolshevism, rationalism, Trade-Unionism and other developments threatening the overthrow of an old order and a caste-system. These Hitler did little to destroy ; he even favoured them, while concentrating upon the annihilation of the third. The Churches, the big industrialists and financiers, the heads of the civil service, the large estate owners—these began to separate themselves from, even to stand up to, Hitler when they discovered that his kind of brown bolshevism was rather worse, since it was more wanton and subtle, than the red. But the soldiers, pampered and spoiled and favoured as never before, not even under the Hohenzollern soldier-kings, went further than any with Hitler. He could have relied on them until the end had he, the ex-lance-corporal, the drummer, not yielded to the ambition of playing Napoleon and, as their " war lord," not made at least five major mistakes.

WHAT were these mistakes ? In the first place he did not attack Britain when, in the summer of 1940, he might perhaps have overpowered her. Then he assailed Russia after having given her two years to prepare. Like his hapless predecessor, Kaiser Wilhelm II, he dragged America into the war. Next he squandered his best troops for the sake of prestige when he disregarded the generals' demand for a withdrawal from the most exposed positions in Russia at the outset of last winter. Finally, he debased all favours and advantages previously granted to his officers' corps by forcibly permeating it with his Nazi Party gangsters who were granted ranks for which generals of the old school had had to work hard for decades, under exacting professional and social rules. Of all Hitler's mistakes, this last is most likely to accelerate his doom, even beyond all that the mounting power and experience of the United Nations can do.

Hitler got away with his first grave mistake in this connexion : he had merely to apologize for the murder, on June 30, 1934, of General von Schleicher, his predecessor as Chancellor, and his wife. He was able to dismiss von Blomberg, his own docile War Minister, in February 1938, when he got the first faint scent of military opposition, and assumed his role himself, while substituting Keitel and Brauchitsch for his able C.-in-C., General von Fritsch. Then and subsequently between 50 and 100 staff officers, denounced by his hangman Himmler as being involved in the " plot," were done away with, strict secrecy being imposed upon their mourners ; but he had to wait for the war before being able to have Fritsch assassinated without the risk of a revolt. Though neither Hitler nor Himmler shrink from this simple way of overcoming opposition, the latter had to warn the Fuehrer against that " usual method " when giving him the next and most dramatic piece of news about the generals' junta. For this news was of a more powerful, more far-reaching, and more popular move than all the previous ones—nothing less than a challenge by most of the men he had made field-marshals and national heroes, of his decision to go on with his Russian offensive through the bitter winter of 1941.

YET he dismissed von Brauchitsch, von Rundstedt, von Bock and not a few others ; he made himself Supreme Commander in fact as well as in name and tackled the opposition within the army's brains, the General Staff. He had to recall in the spring of 1942 Field-Marshal von Bock, that ruthless Prussian nobleman and soldier whom the army calls " Der Sterber " (the " Die-er "), in order to launch his southern offensive—the result of a compromise with the General Staff which, more correctly than the amateur strategist, gauged Germany's remaining resources ; but he had dismissed since von Leeb, unsuccessful besieger of Leningrad, von Manstein, who had squandered his divisions in the Crimea and failed in the Caucasus approaches, and many others. And, stubbornly insisting upon not only equal but privileged rank for his private S.S. gunmen-force and its gutter-snipe leaders, he favoured the few Nazi upstarts among the regular officers. " If only I had two Rommels ! . . . " he is known to have exclaimed occasionally.

Yet even had he a dozen of the Rommel stamp it would but help him to win a few battles, never to win a great war. For that is the task of extremely difficult, hard, persistent team-work by organized brains, for which Hitler—the Bohemian, the " inspired " leader—has but sneers. So it is that after dismissing generals right and left, after giving amateurish battle-orders painfully translated into strategic language by his private " Fuehrer Staff " under General Jodl, Hitler finally decided upon being, not only his own Supreme C.-in-C., but also his Chief of Staff.

THAT fatal decision welded together a military camarilla inspired by individual disappointments, hatreds, revenges, and ambitions. It centres around Brauchitsch and Bock, the latter dismissed for the second time, on October 4, at Stalingrad. Dismissed—or so Hitler is made to believe. He is hardly aware yet that all the generals to whom he has " given the boot " wanted and got his " boot " to get an alibi for the army leadership in case of a stalemate, for which they hoped—or a defeat, which they now fear. Their technique is simple : when called to his sumptuous H.Q. and confronted with reproaches or demands, they arouse the Fuehrer to one of his famous fits of maniacal fury, then tender their resignation before he has time to calm down. Always weak politicians, their purpose would seem to be the creation of a nucleus of power representing an alternative to Hitler and his gang (who would be sacrificed willingly enough to the Allies—" liquidated " by the Army) ; in return for this, and for the liberation of the West, they would hope with the help of reactionary elements in our midst, to persuade us that the Prussian army must be spared to some extent, with the generals and Junkers at its top, as a bulwark against the tide of Bolshevism threatening to engulf all Europe.

MAYBE their aims are narrow-minded, but the results are far-reaching and should, ultimately, prove disastrous for the Nazis. For their example and their arguments—often more outspoken than those of civilians—spread throughout the country and encourage resistance, not merely in other traditionalist circles, but also amongst the workers and peasants.

The iron monster the Fuehrer is driving across Europe is still colossal ; but it has proved to be cast-iron. The first cracks in its structure—at Voronezh and Stalingrad, in the Caucasus, in N. Africa, and in his western air defences—have shown by now ; and cast-iron breaks suddenly and completely once hammer-blows encounter fissures, however slight.

**HITLER'S 'INTUITION' AT WORK. Hitler is here shown planning the two summer offensives of 1942, both of which were doomed to utter failure. Keitel is seen on the Fuehrer's right, while Von Bock is on the extreme right of the photo. The latter was stated to have been dismissed some three months later for his failure to take Stalingrad.** *Photo, Associated Press*

# Leningrad's Epic of the Unknown Civilian

What London was in 1940, so was Leningrad from 1941 to 1943—an Epic (as a writer in the London Zeitung put it) of the Unknown Civilian. Below we tell of the sixteen months' siege, and of the final battle which lifted the dreadful shadow from the lives of the long-suffering but most valiantly suffering Leningraders.

WHEN Captain Fyodor Sabakhin and Captain Demidov met on the snow-covered, corpse-littered battlefield outside Leningrad they first exchanged the passwords so as to identify themselves. Then, as is the fashion of demonstrative Russians, they gave each other three kisses on the cheek, and flung their arms round each other's shoulders. Their men, too, coming up did likewise. Then for a brief interval they sat on the snow, "swopped" tobacco, and talked for a while of the things they had seen and done.

Just an incident in the years of war. And yet that meeting had an historic importance. For Sabakhin was commander of an infantry battalion of General Govorov's army *in* Leningrad, while Demidov was one of General Meretskov's men fighting their way *to* Leningrad from the Volkhov front to the south-east. Their meeting signalized the junction of the besieged and their deliverers: in other words, the siege of Leningrad had been raised.

For sixteen months Leningrad lay under the menace of imminent capture by the Hitlerites. It was on August 21, 1941 that the Germans under Von Leeb began their onslaught, and by September the siege proper had begun. For some weeks the city was entirely cut off from the rest of Russia, but in November 1941 General Meretskov's troops on the Lower Volkhov front drove the Nazis from the southern shore of Lake Ladoga except for a small stretch at Schluesselburg—and even here the fortress on an island off-shore continued to be held by a handful of Red Marines from the Baltic fleet.

THENCEFORTH communications with Russia were maintained across Lake Ladoga. During the ice-free months light craft and tugs towing barges dashed across the great lake—it is about the size of Wales—to a branch-line of the Murmansk railway; then in December 1941, when the cold was so intense that birds dropped dead on the wing and the life of the city was at its lowest ebb, a double-track highway, complete with traffic-lights, service-stations and bomb-shelters, was brought into operation across the ice. Even so, this was but a slender and precarious route to a city of three million people (not to mention several millions more in the neighbourhood).

What saved Leningrad was the active defence policy of its garrison under Govorov. Always the Russian planes were in action against the Germans in front of the city and their bases on the Finnish coast and in Estonia; always the Russian ground forces nibbled at the Nazi defences so that they could never be properly consolidated. The Red Fleet, too, sailed out when ice permitted to attack the German supply-routes in the Baltic, while in the winter, when the Gulf of Finland was ice-bound, the naval gunners went ashore with their big guns and went into action with them on the land front. Even when, in the depth of last winter, all municipal transport ceased, the water-supply failed, and workers in the factories toiled in Arctic temperatures in overcoats and felt boots—even then the supply of shells, mortars and guns continued to flow from the great armament works inside the city.

AT the outset the city's food stores were considered to be adequate for a long siege, but what with German bombing and the appalling difficulties of transportation across the ice, Leningrad was brought to the verge of famine. Aeroplanes were used to fly provisions into the beleaguered city until the route across the ice had been properly developed. To quote a passage from a brilliant dispatch from the Special Correspondent of The Times in Moscow:

> They were the days when people were dragged dead through the streets on sledges . . . when workers arriving at the factories fell into a coma on the floor by their benches; when it was not rare for someone telephoning to hear the voice falter and cease and to find out afterwards that the speaker had fallen dead; when, save for the sound of battle, the life of the city was stilled and in streets festooned with tangled wires (the Germans dropped pieces of rail to cut them), littered with broken glass and deep in uncleared snow, scenes of desolation occurred.

But even in those hard and terrible times Leningrad showed its fighting spirit. Thousands of its workers went to the front, women taking their places at the furnaces and lathes in the suburbs under shellfire. Although it was so cold that the ink froze in the inkwells, 100,000 children attended the schools; and after the day's lessons were over the boys and girls alike "did their stuff" as messengers, first-aiders and postmen. Wooden houses were torn down for fuel. Communal feeding-centres were organized. On May Day last year, so as to have their share in the national celebrations, 150,000 volunteers set about an immense spring-cleaning of the city with such excellent results that during the summer Leningrad could boast that she was the cleanest city in Russia. Every patch of ground was cultivated, and the heart of the city was transformed into an immense vegetable garden. Most symbolic, perhaps, of Leningrad's spirit was the performance on April 5 by a scratch orchestra to an audience muffled in fur coats in the Pushkin Hall, of Shostakovitch's Seventh Symphony, specially dedicated to the heroic city.

So for sixteen months it went on. Always there was fighting, in winter and summer alike, fearful and bloody; inside the city the people drew in their belts notch by notch, suffered terrible privations, died of hunger and cold. In the autumn of last year Meretskov launched an offensive with a view to taking Sinyavino; and once they cut down the German corridor from eight miles wide to three. But they could never get through the bloody swamps to the Neva.

**RELIEF OF LENINGRAD.** On this map the dotted line shows the German corridor which after 16 months was obliterated by the Russians in Jan. 1943; the subsequent front is indicated by the heavy black lines.
*By courtesy of The Times*

THEN on the morning of Tuesday, January 12, 1943, Meretskov and Govorov struck together. Following an artillery bombardment of unprecedented weight, Red Army infantrymen equipped with climbing-irons slid down the northern bank of the Neva and sped across the ice-covered river to the steep southern bank. As they crossed German shells tore up the surface, but in less than ten minutes the first wave of Russians had made good their foothold on the southern bank. Hard on their heels came the second wave, pushing field-artillery before them, and the guns were hoisted by ropes up the bank. Soon the battle was joined in the network of concrete forts which German military engineering science had created south of Schluesselburg. Next the Russians brought heavy tanks across the river by pontoons; and these, aided by the low-flying Stormoviks and the infantry with bayonets and automatics, thrust the Germans out of their massive fortifications to the edge of the forest. Meanwhile General Meretskov had smashed his way through to Ladoga and now pushed southwards towards Sinyavino, so as to link up with Govorov across the German corridor. And all the time the guns of the Schluesselburg fortress and of the Baltic fleet kept up a terrific pounding of the slowly narrowing belt between the two armies.

GERMAN resistance was of the most embittered kind; particularly violent was the fighting between Sinyavino and Schluesselburg and 10,000 Germans were reported to be killed there. Then Schluesselburg was stormed by units of the Leningrad army, aided by ski-troops from the Volkhov front who, crossing the canal, reached Lake Ladoga behind the town and so surrounded the garrison. The Nazi ring was broken.

But all the generalship, the bravery and devotion of the Red Armies could not have maintained Leningrad for the Soviet if it had not been for the ordinary men and women who for so many long and terrible months within its ring of forts lived and worked and fought and died.

E. ROYSTON PIKE

**CHILDREN IN LENINGRAD,** playing in a sunlit street of the hard-pressed Second City of the Soviets, appear to be happily unconscious of the grim struggle which their parents waged against the enemy for many a tragic month. *Photo, U.S.S.R. Official*

# Speedy Progress Along the Road to Rostov

**RUSSIAN DRIVE TOWARDS ROSTOV-ON-DON** was further accelerated by the Red Army's recapture of Salsk, on Jan. 22, 1943. From this important railway junction the Soviet forces advanced to capture Tikhoretsk and Kropotkin in an attempt to cut off the enemy fleeing from Armavir. A Russian armoured car patrol is here seen pushing forward across the snow-covered ground under fire of German mine-throwers in the Lower Don area. A mine is exploding as the cars advance.



*Photo, Planet News*

# THE WAR IN THE AIR

*by* Capt. Norman Macmillan, M.C., A.F.C.

TOWARDS the end of January 1943 it was reported that the German police were to enforce the carrying of gas-masks by German civilians throughout the Reich. It is curious that this report should coincide with the increasing misfortunes of the German armies in Russia and North Africa. Under the prevailing conditions of continuing victories there is no reason for the United Nations to resort to aerial gas warfare. Moreover, Britain has stated without equivocation that we will not be first to use the gas weapon.

The objective of this enforcement order might be to frighten civilians in Germany and make them more ready to toe the line to the most stringent Government decrees ordaining harsher terms of living. If this is the reason it might be good United Nations propaganda to use aircraft to drop leaflets containing an official assurance that the United Nations will not use gas unless Germany or one of her allies first uses it. This would defeat the German object of instilling fear into the people to make them obedient to the crack of the whip. The alternative objective of the order might be to prepare for the consequences of an Axis resort to gas warfare as a means to try to turn defeat on land into victory. That is a possibility against which the United Nations must be prepared. We should not forget that Italy is the only Power ever to have used gas from the air as a weapon of war, and that she used it without pity against Abyssinian tribesmen, who were completely defenceless against this form of war because they had no defence against gas and no defence against aircraft.

LET us hope that air war on the scale on which it is waged today will not take this additional horrible turn. But even if this were to happen I cannot conceive that it would bring victory to the Axis. The end of the air war, and of the war as a whole, is already written in the waning power of the Axis in the air and the waxing power of the United Nations in that element. British aircraft output in 1942 was 50 per cent greater than in 1941.

The forward troops of the Eighth Army entered Tripoli early on January 23. The advance of the Army over the 1,400 miles from El Alamein was made under the continuous cover of the R.A.F. The Luftwaffe was unable to play a big part in the campaign because its aircraft and supplies were often smashed on the ground. From October 1 to January 22 fighters, bombers, and groundfire of the United Nations destroyed in the air 507 enemy aircraft for a loss of 335 Allied aircraft. Successive campaigns in the Middle East have cost the Axis about 4,000 aircraft lost in flight and about 2,000 on the ground. Yet only recently has the Axis had to face a great accumulation of air strength.

### DESERT Landing-Ground Prepared in 3 hours as 8th Army Advance

During the 8th Army's advance fighter squadrons' ground personnel moved up almost within sight of the enemy, striking forward in mobile columns to occupy evacuated enemy airfields or create new ones out of desert scrub. One landing-ground 1,200 yards square was serviceable three hours after advanced ground parties had selected the site. That was in the Bir Dufan area, fewer than a hundred air miles from the town of Tripoli. Fighter formations, including an American pursuit group, moved forward into this area in one hop of 140 miles.

R.A.F. ground staff, with their supply and transport columns, attached units of Royal Engineers, and airfield graders, were protected by the Allied fighters. Ahead of Rommel's rearguard German and Italian ground units were constantly harried from the air. Rommel's supply position was rendered precarious by air attacks against shipping and ports on both sides of the Mediterranean and Junkers 52 air-transports in flight. The citation to the award of a Bar to the D.F.C. to Wing Commander S. B. Grant showed how Rommel tried and failed to get supplies by air. It reads: "In December 1942 this officer flew the leading aircraft of a formation acting as escort to a force of fighter-bombers. During the flight 63 enemy air transports escorted by five twin-engined fighters were intercepted. Leaving the fighter-bombers to attack the transports, Wing Commander Grant led his formation in an attack on the enemy fighters, all of which were shot down . . ." That left the Junkers transports as easy prey. Aircraft based on Malta played a big part in these interceptions of transport aircraft and shipping.

**CASTEL BENITO AIRFIELD, outside Tripoli, was heavily strafed by Allied bombers as Gen. Montgomery's forces drew near the capital. A sapper of the 8th Army is here seen removing a mine from the landing-ground. Behind him is another sapper at work with a detector. Wrecked hangars are shown in the background.**
*Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright*

ROMMEL'S defeat must be ascribed in part to the failure of General Field-Marshal Albert Kesselring's 2nd Air Fleet of the Luftwaffe (of which the 2nd Air Corps was commanded by Colonel-General Bruno Lörzer, well-known Great War fighter pilot, and first President of the German Air Sport Association—Deutsche Luftsport Verband—founded in 1933 by the Nazis as the foundation of the flying section of the forbidden air force) when operating from Sicily against Malta. For months this Air Fleet pounded away at Malta, but could not break the spirit of the George Cross Island—greatest "aircraft carrier" in the world. Curiously enough, Kesselring and Rommel were not friends. Now Malta has done much to smash Rommel.

In page 470 I referred to Rommel's retreat westward, pointing out that it was by no means a retreat to safety. He is now open to air attack from the advanced airfields around Tripoli, from Malta, and from air squadrons in Tunisia, and Algeria; from the air he is outflanked and surrounded; his way of escape is, as ours was from Greece and Crete, by sea, or else by air. The *dénouement* of the African battle against Rommel and Von Arnim has yet to come, and it may hold surprises.

From the United Kingdom the Fortress and Liberator bombers of the U.S. Army Air Force 8th Bomber Command attacked Germany for the first time on Wednesday, January 27, from bases in the United Kingdom. Principal target was Wilhelmshaven naval base, on which bombs were dropped from a great height through cloud-gaps. The Liberators shot down 22 German fighters. Other of their daylight targets lay in North-West Germany.

### MOSQUITOES Raid Submarine Diesel Engine Works at Copenhagen

On the evening of the same day Mosquitoes of Bomber Command, led by Wing Commander Hughie Edwards, V.C., D.S.O., D.F.C., attacked the submarine Diesel engine works in the shipbuilding yards of Durneister and Wain at Copenhagen. After passing through banks of cloud and rain the crews found ideal weather over The Sound. Speeding in at dusk between 50 and 300 feet up, the pilots dodged the chimneys and many spires of the Danish capital, and then the masts of ships in the harbour, and reached the island east of the city where the yards stand. Everything made there goes to the enemy. In face of intense flak from shore and ships "the great bulk of the bombs went in," and flames roared up to a hundred feet.

From the night of January 18 until the morning of January 28 Bomber Command raided heavy industries, factories, oil installations, railway communications, submarine bases and docks in the Ruhr, at Hengelo, Terneuzen, Lorient, Flushing, Bruges, Bordeaux, Copenhagen and Düsseldorf, laid mines in enemy waters, and bombed airfields at Maupertuis (Cherbourg), Abbeville and St. Omer. Coastal Command was also concerned in the attack on Bordeaux. The raids were made by day and night. Twenty-two bombers were lost.

American Mitchell B.25 284 m.p.h. medium bombers were officially mentioned for the first time as part of the force which bombed the French airfields on January 22. These bombers were named after the late General William Mitchell—the great, and in his life time despised, American protagonist of air power.

LOSING only one aircraft, the R.A.F. bombed Berlin in daylight for the first time on Saturday, January 30. To celebrate Hitler's tenth accession anniversary they made it a double. Darting out of cloud cover, Mosquitoes bombed at 11 a.m. and 4 p.m., the 56th and 57th raids by British aircraft on the Reich capital. A.A. was negligible; flak-crews were dispersed to hear loud-speaker speeches by Goering and Goebbels. Bomber Command made Hermann one hour late on the microphone. Emden was also raided that day. Hamburg got a tough half-hour during the succeeding night from 8,000-lb. and 4,000-lb. bombs and tens of thousands of incendiaries; five bombers were lost in this raid.

Air war in New Guinea, New Britain, the Solomon Islands, and the surrounding territories continued against military and naval concentrations.

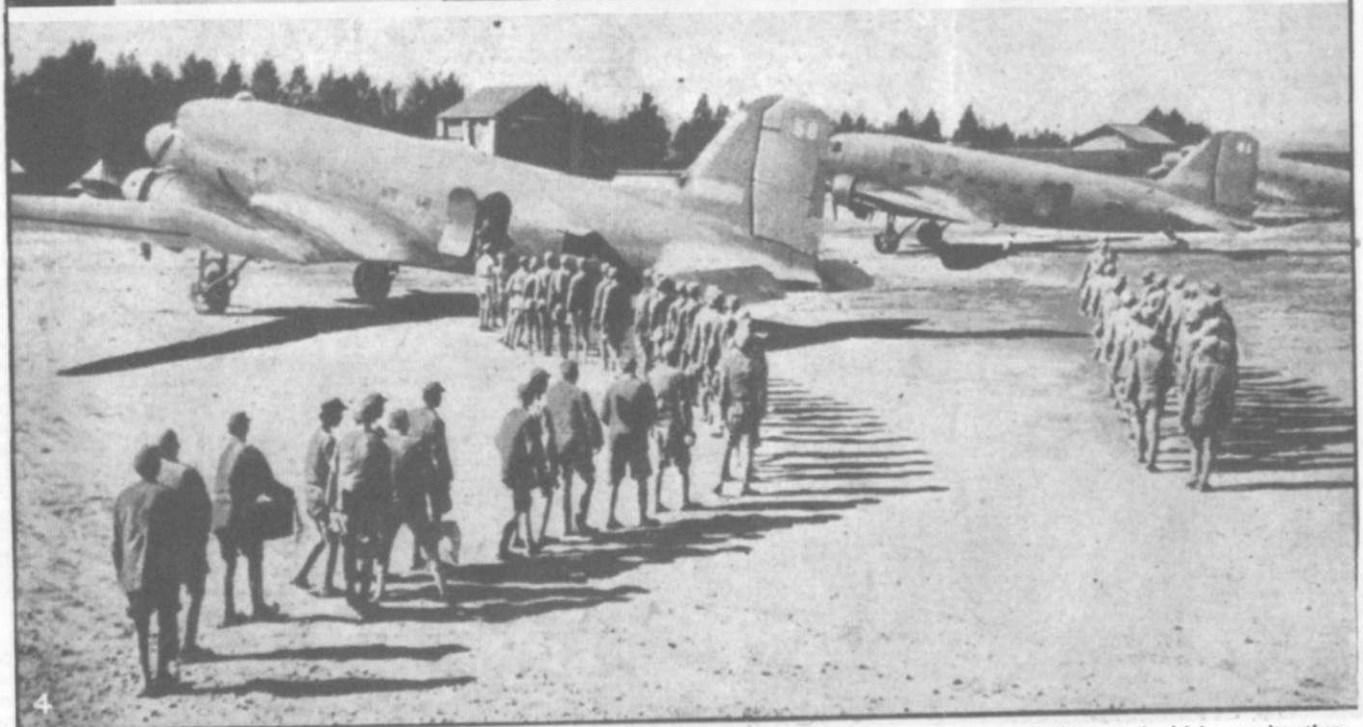
# At Home in a Land of Scrub and Sand

**WITH THE R.A.F. IN N. AFRICA.** 1, Bargaining with a native vendor in a village street. 2, Intelligence Officer listens to pilots' accounts of an operational raid over enemy territory. 3, This tent-pole serves as a scoreboard, and testifies to the squadron's bombing efficiency. 4, Armourers of a fighter-bomber squadron busily loading a Hurricane for an attack on Axis positions. 5, These pilots have just returned from a raid. Their machines are seen in the background.



*Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright*

# Help from America for Hard-pressed China




U.S. AIRCRAFT IN CHINA. 1, Clearing the ground to enlarge an airfield, these Chinese women and children are busily at work with hoes and scythes. 2, U.S. airman indicates his score of four destroyed Jap planes to a comrade who also has one to his credit. 3, Chinese soldier mounts guard as repair work begins on a fighter plane. The huts serve as camouflaged hangars. 4, Transport planes of the India-China Ferry Command loading-up with Chinese troops on their way to the front.

*Photos, Keystone, Associated Press*

# Did He Want His Bombs to Drop Just Here?

BOMBS ON A LONDON SCHOOL. Soon after midday on Jan. 20, 1943 enemy aircraft dropped bombs on the south-eastern suburbs of London. An L.C.C. school in Lewisham received a direct hit, 39 children and 5 teachers being killed, and 60 children severely injured. 1, The demolished wing. 2, A clergyman assists Civil Defence workers. 3, Despite her injuries this child manages to smile. 4, A policeman directs the search for the missing. 5, Wreckage of one of the raiders—an F.W.190 which was shot down. On his return to Berlin one of the Nazi airmen, Capt. Stuhman, broadcast an account: "We dropped our bombs where they were to be dropped."

*Photos, Daily Mirror, Planet News, Associated Press, G.P.U.*

# Alamein to Tripoli: 1,400 Miles in 80 Days

"Today," said Sir James Grigg, Minister of War, in a broadcast delivered on Saturday, January 23, 1943, "we have the news of the fall of Tripoli. To all intents and purposes this completes the destruction of the Italian Empire in Africa." In what follows we tell something of the magnificent organization which lay behind a great feat of arms and which, coupled with brilliant generalship, military skill and bravery, made the triumph possible.

On October 23, 1942 Rommel's army and Montgomery's faced each other across the wire and trenches of El Alamein. The one was still flushed with triumph, boasting of the next stage which would inevitably carry it to the Nile and beyond. The other, with defeats to avenge, was quietly confident in its new-found strength. At dawn on that fateful day the Eighth Army attacked. For a while there was fierce battle, but from the first Montgomery secured and maintained the mastery. By November 4 Rommel's Afrika Korps and his Italian allies were streaming back along the road they had come. The Eighth Army had begun that advance which was to carry it across 1,400 miles to Tripoli, and past Tripoli over the border into Tunisia—as great a distance as from Leningrad to Paris, as from New York to New Orleans.

It was not an unopposed advance. All the time (as Sir James Grigg emphasized) there was skirmishing between the light armoured forces which headed our columns and the tanks and guns which shielded Rommel's rear. Sometimes, as at Fuka and Matruh, the fighting was on a bigger scale; and twice, at El Agheila and at Buerat, Rommel halted and dug himself in, making at least a show of serious resistance. But General Montgomery profited by these enforced delays to bring up the innumerable stores and supplies by which an army lives and fights; and as soon as the stores were in hand he gave Rommel that extra kick which drove him on once more in flight.

Nor was it easy going. There was no railway beyond that which runs from the Nile Valley to Tobruk. There was only one good road with an asphalt surface, the one which runs the whole distance through the coastal region; and that had been blown up in scores of places by the enemy. Thousands of mines, too, were strewn in the path of the advancing troops. But when causeways had been blown, when minefields hidden under the dusty tarmac of the single road made it impassable, our cars ploughed their way across the desert until such time—often it was a matter of hours only—as the engineers had cleared the obstacles and made a safe passage for the lorries following each other bonnet to tail for mile after mile along the line of march.

Working to an imperative time-table over some of the worst going in the world, faithful always to the rule "the supplies must get through," the swarms of vehicles kept up their steady progress. Well might the War Secretary pay tribute to the work of the Quartermaster-General's staff under Lieut.-Gen. Lindsell, and to those vitally necessary but so often unnamed services, the Royal Engineers, the Royal Army Service Corps, the Royal Army Ordnance Corps, and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. As the army advanced it was accompanied by an elaborate gradation of aid detachments and workshops which retrieved cripples and made them fighting fit again.

Constant labour was required to improve and repair the surface of the coastal road, and to make passable the rough, ill-defined tracks across the desert which constituted the shortest route. The railway from Alamein to Tobruk was soon working with the punctuality of a British railroad, bringing up scores of thousands of tons of supplies. What quantities of ammunition had to be handled may be gathered from the fact that in the course of the barrage that preceded the attack at El Alamein the field guns alone fired 1,000 tons weight of shells in an hour. In one week at a late stage in the advance over three million gallons of petrol were delivered at the front, and over 8,000 tons of ammunition. On an average, each man required 5 lb. weight of food (and containers) per day, as well as 50 cigarettes and 2 boxes of matches a week.

Most important of all the stores was water. From El Agheila to the hills south of Tripoli fresh water is altogether lacking. The Army needed more than 5,000 tons of water a day and half of it was brought from the Nile, along a pipe-line to Tobruk; 1,500 tons, still from the Nile, were shipped to Benghazi daily, 300 tons were landed on beaches from lighters, and the balance of 700 tons came from local wells. From Tobruk to Benghazi the water was carried to the forward troops by water companies operating with specially-constructed tank wagons or metal containers holding four gallons each.

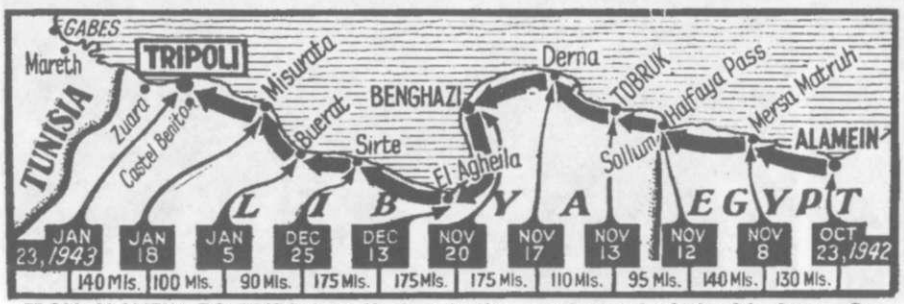
A great part in the advance was played by the Royal Navy, whose preparations began months before, not at Alexandria, but (cabled George Crawley, Reuters special correspondent) at the ends of the earth, where warships herded together the vital convoys which flowed unceasingly to the Middle East.

After the great push began the Navy was charged with tremendous and hazardous tasks in feeding and supplying the Army as it advanced along the Libyan coast. One ton of supplies delivered by sea to the advanced posts was worth (it was estimated) ten sent along the hundreds of miles of over-crowded roads between Alexandria and Tripoli. Most of the petrol required—millions of gallons—was sent by ship to Tobruk or Benghazi. Before the opening of the Alamein battle Naval advance parties were organized in detail: complete units for Sollum, Bardia, Tobruk, Derna, Benghazi and Tripoli were waiting at Alexandria for the word to go, long before each of the ports fell in turn. Not a single item was left unprovided for. Minesweepers for the opening up of the captured ports, small patrol craft for the essential harbour duties, tugs and tank-landing craft—all were ready and complete with supplies and equipment. As a result, petrol and water were landed at the captured ports almost before the dust of the rearmost Axis vehicles had settled.

LT.-GEN. SIR W. G. LINDSELL, in charge of the Middle East Administration since August 1942. In 1939-1940 he was similarly responsible for the provisioning of the B.E.F. in France.
*Photo, Associated Press*

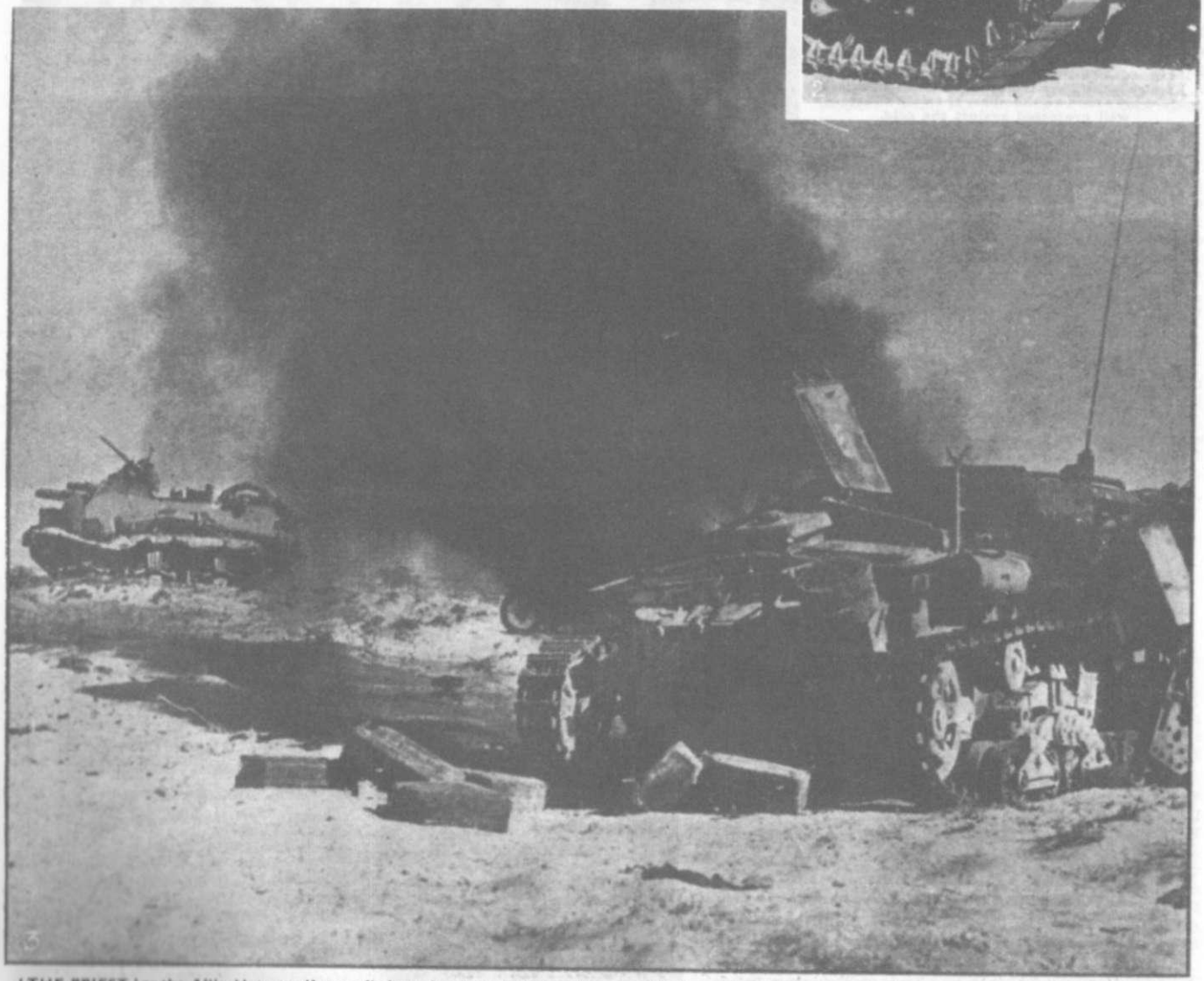
All the way from Egypt to Tripoli the R.A.F. spread its covering wings around and above the Eighth Army; but perhaps its biggest contribution to the triumph was the unrelenting and shattering blows dealt at the enemy's air-bases and supply-lines. There was scarcely a day or night on which the Axis lines were not bombed, raked with fire from cannon, machine-guns, left shattered. Far in the rear their personnel was demoralized. From the beginning of the battle air superiority was secured, and that meant much more than superiority of air power over just the battle area: it meant soundness of directing power at the top, efficient means of supply and maintenance. Then it may be added that R.A.F. transport aircraft were used on a much larger scale than ever before; huge quantities of ammunition, petrol, rations and water were flown to the troops composing the vanguard. Bombers taking supplies to the front brought back wounded. In return the Army seized and made ready new advanced landing-grounds which enabled our fighters to keep up with the retreating enemy.

In spite of everything the average rate of advance of the Eighth Army was 17 miles a day; if we exclude the major pauses at El Agheila and Buerat it was 30 miles a day. In eighty days Montgomery's men stormed their way from Egypt to the borders of Tunisia; Cyrenaica was overrun, Tripolitania captured, Tripoli entered in triumph. In those same eighty days Rommel's Afrika Korps suffered 80,000 casualties in killed, wounded and prisoners; 500 of his tanks were destroyed or captured, 1,000 pieces of artillery, and tens of thousands of his vehicles.




**FROM ALAMEIN TO TRIPOLI in 80 days is the proud record of the 8th Army. On Nov. 4, 1942 Gen. Montgomery's forces began their pursuit of the Afrika Korps in Egypt; on Jan. 23, 1943 the 8th Army occupied Tripoli, having covered a distance of nearly 1,400 miles. This map shows the stage-by-stage progress of our troops along the Mediterranean coast.**
*By courtesy of the Daily Herald.*

# A 'Most Useful Weapon' Mr. Churchill Called It



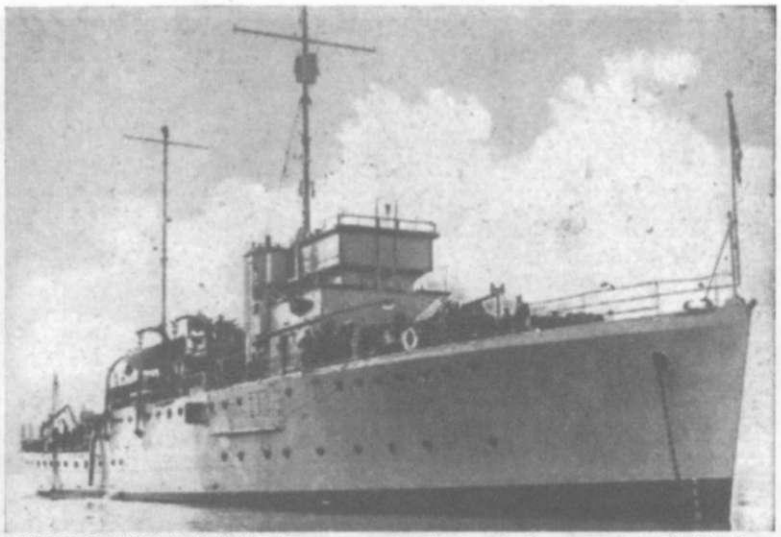
'THE PRIEST,' as the Allies' latest self-propelled gun has been nicknamed by the 8th Army, is a 105-mm. gun-howitzer known to the U.S. Army as the M. 5. As Mr. Churchill disclosed on November 11, 1942, it is a most useful weapon in contending with the German 88-mm. anti-tank gun. 1, Side view; note the one-pounder A.A. gun amidships. 2, Mounted on an M. 3 Gen. Grant tank chassis, the 105-mm. gun is here seen ready for action 3, A "Priest" in the background passes a burning enemy tank.



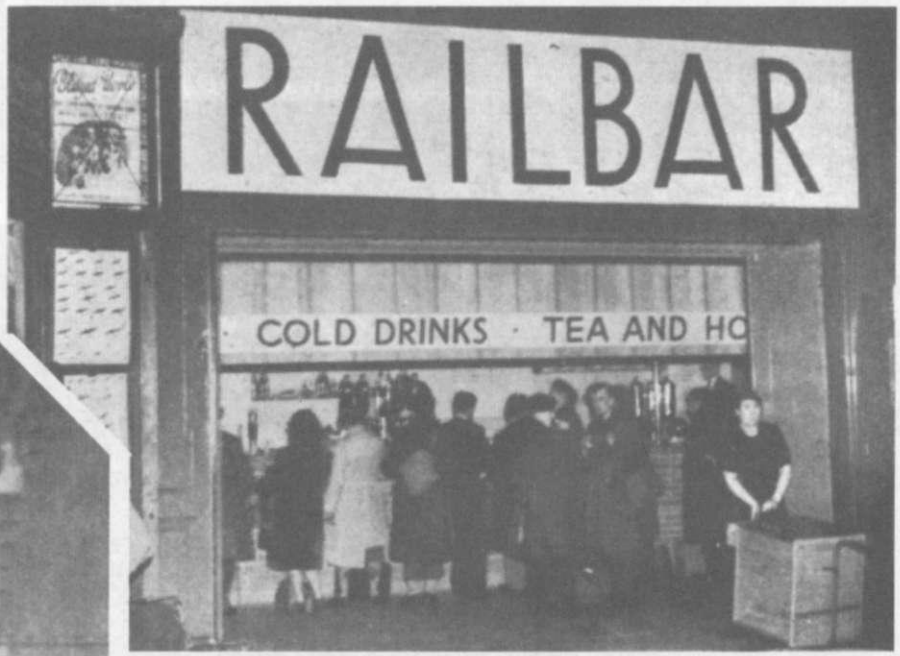
Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright

# By Land and Sea With Our Roving Camera

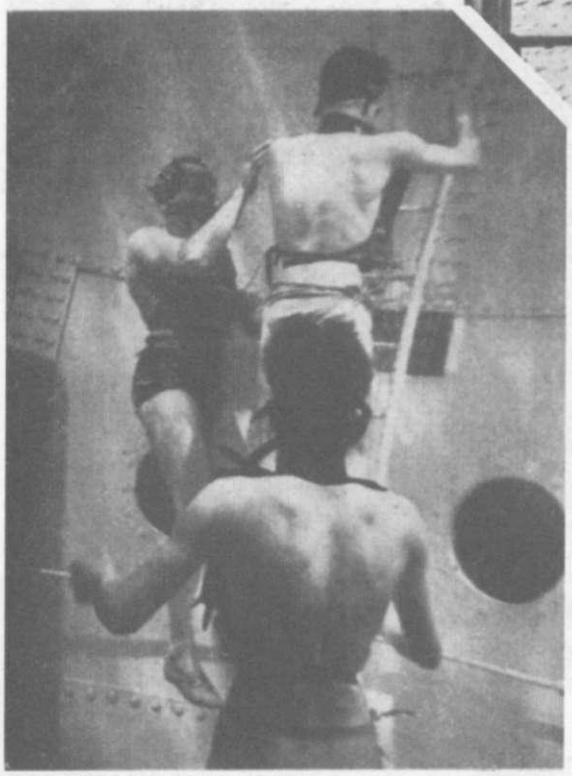
**FUR COATS FOR A.T.S.** Operational A.T.S. have recently been issued with winter clothing. Here are seen two members of an A.A. battery well protected against the cold.



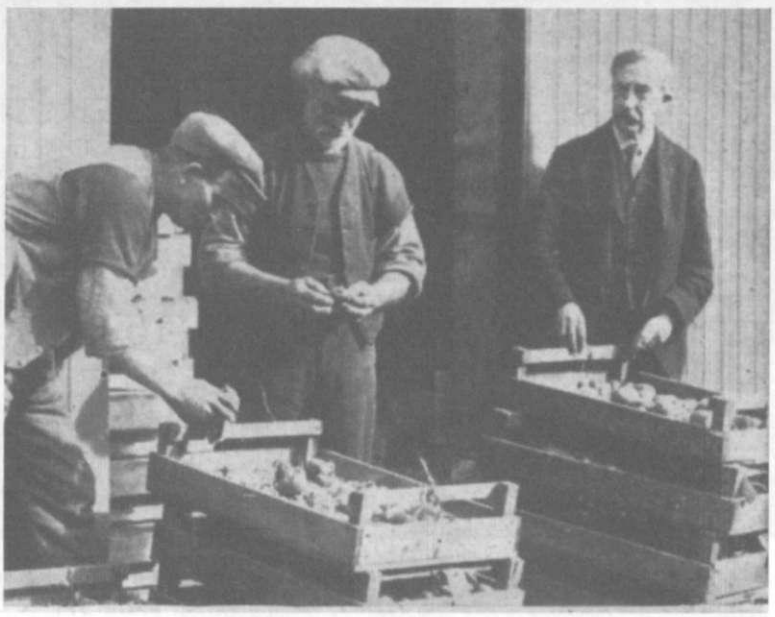
**H.M.S. BRAMBLE,** British minesweeper forming part of a convoy to N. Russia, was announced on Jan. 20, 1943 to have been lost. She made an enemy sighting report on the morning of Dec. 31, 1942, and a study of reports received later makes it clear that the Bramble endeavoured most courageously to do what she could to protect the convoy, and went down fighting.




**STATION RAILBAR** (right), recently opened by the L.M.S. at Euston, has been designed to take the place in wartime travel of withdrawn dining-cars on trains.



**UNDERWATER FIGHTERS.** Before crews set out on their first submarine operational patrol they are given a rigorous training. The instructor is here seen helping pupils to descend the steel ladder into the practice tank.



**'POTATO KING OF ARRAN.'** Mr. D. MacKelvin, M.B.E. (right), and two of his helpers inspect seed potatoes before planting. He has cultivated over 3,000 seedling varieties on his trial grounds in the Isle of Arran. *Photos, Central Press, Sport & General, Topical Press, E. W. Tattersall*

# I WAS THERE! Eye Witness Stories of the War

## *These Men Juggle with Death on the Home Front*

Our fighting men are dependent on the perilous work of Home Front civilians who daily juggle with deadly little grains of powder at the risk of instant destruction to themselves. Here is "Rear-ranker's" story of his recent visit to one of these factories somewhere in the country.

THE gatekeeper took my pipe, tobacco and matches. Then they fixed me up with rubber goloshes over my shoes, and the turn-ups of my trousers were carefully swept clean and left turned down. My guide explained. Trouser turn-ups can carry match-heads and all sorts of things which may ignite chemicals. Shoes have nails and metal pieces which may grind a particle of explosive to danger heat. As he put it, "Some of the stuff round here goes off if you raise your eyebrows at it."

Single-storied wooden huts are separated by high grassy mounds of earth, to localize explosions or fires. There are no hanging lights, no electric switches, no metal fittings. The wooden swing-doors have no handles and no latches. Their hinges are on the outside and the doors pull open with a knotted rope. The lighting comes from bulbs shining inwards through small thick glass screens in the inner wall. Fire-extinguishers, fire-hydrants and hoses are everywhere.

THERE'S a white line painted along the centre of the gangways. It isn't there for fun. For you meet men carrying little red boxes by rope handles. And, believe me, those boxes aren't just full of ice-cream. So you walk on the left of the white line—and stay walking there. The heavier stuff is gently pushed around by hand in small wooden wagons on little brass wheels. The wood is dovetailed together to make those boxes and wagons. There isn't a steel nail anywhere.

Experienced middle-aged men do the mixing, and work the hydraulic presses—at 3 tons a square inch—that squeeze this sensitive stuff into tiny pellets with a terrific kick in them. Half a dozen men will be standing at a little counter almost touching each other. Each will be doing just one—or maybe two—delicate, unhurried filling operations. So many tiny pellets, and then a wafer-thin paper washer, placed in a container by one man—so much powder, carefully weighed, and a little wad of felt by the next, and so on.

Finally, the last man in the row gently pushes the container on to the tray of a vertical flash-tight half-cylinder let into the wall. Then he pulls a lever which turns the cylinder—just like the revolving doors at a hotel entrance. The man waiting on the other side of the wall takes out the container and carefully places it ready for the hydraulic press.

THEN my guide took me off to a small hut all by itself. He turned me over to its only inhabitant, who examined my pass and took off my cuff-links and wrist-watch. I had to put on one of the workmen's coats—he didn't like my buttons. Inside the hut a smooth wooden counter ran the full length of one of the walls. On it were a few tiny straggling heaps of reddish powder. Innocent-looking stuff. It arrives, mixed with water, in small red-painted kegs.

While the powder's wet it wouldn't hurt a fly. But on the counter in this hut the grains are drying—and there's a special trap to keep that fly out, and any other insect which might get in. For if one of them picked up a single dry grain and flew around and dropped it in the hut, you, and the fly, and quite a slice of the surrounding countryside would never be seen again. There's even a fine mesh net hung below the ceiling to catch any tiny splinters that might fall. As usual, the lighting comes from electric bulbs behind glass in the walls. Even the sunlight is dangerous.

He showed me a wooden egg-spoon. It was nice and smooth, he said, for picking up the powder. Less chance of accidentally squeezing a grain against the counter. Slowly and gently he started filling a minute glass tube. Marvellous to watch how skilfully he made those deadly little grains run with the minimum of friction against each other.

A POLISHED leather case, about the size of a 1-lb. tin of tobacco, stood at the end of the counter. It was deeply padded with cotton-wool, lined with fine silk. Inside it, four of the little glass tubes, already filled, stood upright in their holes. He finished the fifth tube and put it in. Then he put the leather cap on the case, slipped his wrist through the silk thongs which ran right under it, and we walked out of the enclosure to the mixing hut.

He put the case on a counter in the mixing hut, whistled to George the Mixer, shook my hand and said good morning. Then he walked off to do the same thing tomorrow—and the day after—and the day after that. And you would think that he had just brought round a box of cigarettes, instead of the potential destruction of half a dozen enemy ships. I never saw such cold nerve and skill—for he's under no illusions as to what may happen if he should make one mistake.

GEORGE showed me his polished brass mixing bowl, about a foot in diameter. It's mounted on a pedestal, waist-high for him. Close against one side of the bowl is a strong curved shield, bolted to the floor, and reaching up well above his head. In the shield there's a thick glass window at his eye-level.

In the mixing bowl lay a tiny silk bag, about the size of one of those old-fashioned ring purses. It was wide open and he showed me the other powder inside waiting to be mixed with the dangerous red one. Properly mixed, he explained, they can be handled with absolute safety. Then he stationed me behind the entrance wall, where I could put my head round and watch. He took one of the little glass tubes of red powder and went behind his shield. Putting his arms round inside the shield, and watching through his glass pane, he emptied the red powder very gently into the bowl. Then he gathered the neck of the bag together with a silk draw-cord, which he hooked over a wooden lever on the machine which does the mixing.

**DANGER—T.N.T.! This Canadian worker wears a face-piece to prevent inhalation of poisonous fumes. A graphic description of work in a British explosives factory is given in this page.** *Photo, Fox*

All is now ready for mixing, and we leave the hut. George then pulls the machine's starting lever. We wait in silence, for this is the critical moment. It either mixes as usual—or it goes off. George knows the timing to a split second. All's well—we go back—and now the stuff is as safe as houses. With grim humour he shows me how the wall of the hut on the opposite side of his shield is fitted to blow out with the least trouble and expense.

NOW the powder mixture goes into detonators, which give the kick that explodes the big fillings of guncotton, or T.N.T., in torpedoes, mines, and shells and bombs. You can handle these big fillings with no more ceremony than so many hundredweights of cheese. Put a detonator the size of your little finger in the middle of them, and—well, you've seen photographs of what's happening to Axis ships and factories.

## *His Operating-Theatre was in Mid-Atlantic*

One of an escort group fighting off a U-boat attack on a convoy, a corvette has been hit and has several badly wounded men needing immediate medical attention. A young surgeon aboard a destroyer receives the corvette's signal. What happens then is told by the Naval Reporter of The Evening Standard, from which the story is reprinted here.

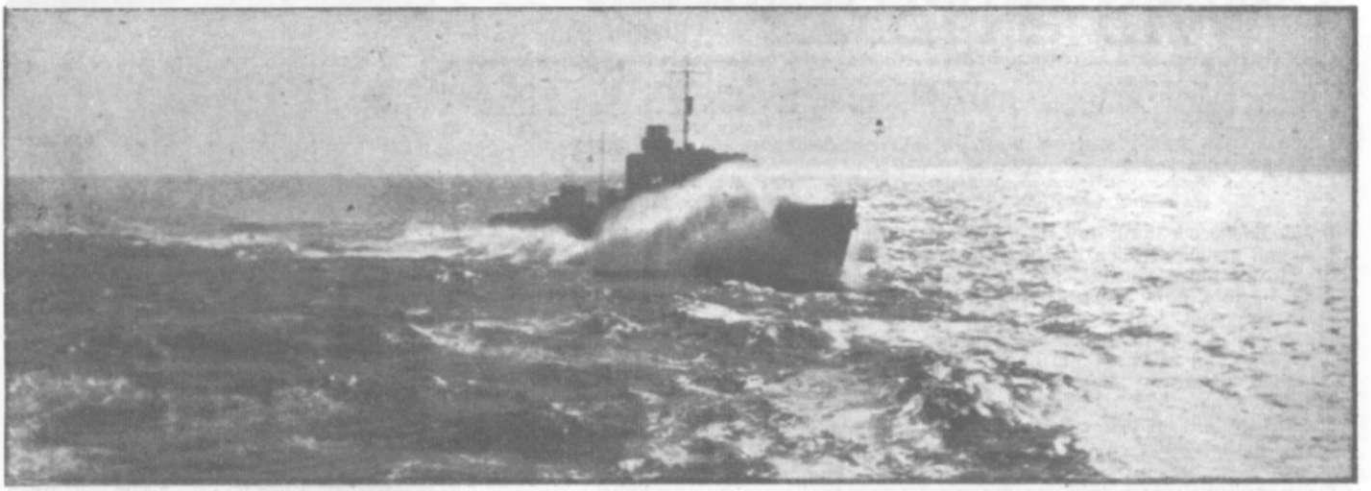
HUNDREDS of miles out in the Atlantic a British destroyer momentarily slackens speed as a small boat is quickly lowered away. The ratings, in their cumbersome cork life-jackets, pull lustily as the boat rides like a cockle-shell up and down the deep troughs of the waves. In the after-part of the boat sits a solitary figure clutching a case and with a heavily-laden haversack slung over his shoulder.

The destroyer gathers speed again and swings round in a wide protecting circle as the boat approaches a smaller warship. The loaded figure scrambles agilely aboard as the boat is tossed up a matter of some ten or twelve feet on an almost oily swell.

"Good," says the destroyer captain, who has been watching from his bridge. "The doctor has made it. Now we must get cracking."

The smaller warship is a corvette flying the flag of the Norwegian Navy. Not long before she, and other ships of the escort group, fought off a U-boat attack on a convoy. The convoy is safe, but the corvette has been hit and has signalled that she has several badly wounded men who require immediate attention. The young surgeon at once collects his instruments and dressings and goes to their aid.

Aboard the destroyer, in a north-west port, I have just met the surgeon. His story is one that is typical of the men who wear bright



**A NORWEGIAN CORVETTE during a patrol in the Atlantic. On such a small ship as this the "Doc." referred to in the accompanying story performed a number of ticklish operations, while his "theatre" rocked and rolled with the ocean swell.** *Photo, Norwegian Official*

red between the gold rings on their arms. He is an R.N.V.R. surgeon lieutenant in the early twenties. When war came he was completing his medical studies at the London Hospital. He took an appointment at the hospital and grew old in experience during six months of heavy raids in the East End. Then the doctor—he is an Irishman, with crisp, curly hair and grey eyes which alternate between deep seriousness and twinkling mirth—joined the Navy.

"Sometimes for weeks on end it seems a waste," he told me. "There is little for me to do except act as a glorified chemist's shop. Then there comes a time when I need every bit of skill I have as a surgeon, and there must be no hesitation because men's lives are at stake."

"Doc," as the wardroom knows him, has been across the Atlantic 14 times. "Life in a destroyer which is crashing about the Atlantic in all weathers can be extraordinarily uncomfortable," he confided. "But for some reason which I cannot define, I enjoy it.

Before the war began I had planned to go round the world as a ship's doctor. Well, I've travelled many thousands of miles at sea—but it has hardly been a world tour." Of his work he would only tell me one instance. He knew that I had heard most of the story.

"When I arrived in the Norwegian corvette," he said, "I knew that I was under strict orders from my own captain to return to the destroyer in five hours, just before darkness fell.

"There was no sick bay in the corvette, so we rigged up an emergency operating theatre in one of the flats (small open spaces) near the galley. I had to perform three major operations and several minor ones.

"Often, as the ship rolled, I had to prop myself up against a bulkhead. An R.N.V.R. lieutenant, British liaison officer in the ship, who had never seen an operation before, helped me. He kept up the supply of hot water and held the patients on the 'table.' I finished with twenty minutes to spare."

# *'All Hell Seemed to be Let Loose Beneath Us'*

**Several newspaper correspondents accompanied the R.A.F. on the great bombing raid on the German capital on the night of January 16; Colin Bednall of The Daily Mail (from which this story is reprinted) tells how the Lancaster bomber in which he went to "the party" was brought home.**

We were just turning in on the last leg of our journey and preparing for the run into the heart of Berlin when all hell seemed to be let loose beneath us. We had sailed right into the middle of a barrage. The guns kept quiet until we were in the middle of it, and then they all opened up in one bewildering, shattering crash.

The whole world, it seemed to me in my greenness, was suddenly spread with horrible flashes. Shells were exploding everywhere. The pilot took violent evasive action, throwing the aircraft around like an aerobatic fighter. This went on for minutes, but still there were shells everywhere.

Then, suddenly, I heard over the intercom. just about the worst thing I ever wanted to hear. The aircraft had shuddered from a burst right beside us, and the pilot shouted in rage: "Damn! Blast it! I'm hit!" He called for the air bomber. I heard him say, "Come up here, quick!"

But there was no reply from the air bomber, and I remember wondering what was to happen next. We all thought he must have been hit even more seriously than the pilot. After an interval that seemed like years, with the plane swinging over in a steep downward turn, the air bomber's voice came through on the inter-com. as sweet as life itself. "Yes, sir," was all he said, in a voice that was as quiet and restrained as that of a waiter in a West-End restaurant. Then I heard the pilot say he was bleeding rather badly and he would have to see how much worse it was likely to get. Then the pilot did what obviously seemed nothing extraordinary to him, but to me was little short of incredible.

We were still in the middle of the barrage with "dirt" flying everywhere, and before he decided on his next action he calmly circled round, studying the flow of blood from the wound and calculating whether he could afford to continue to Berlin.

The air bomber by this time was up in the cockpit beside the pilot, and had clamped a dressing on to the wound. The blood came through this as if it were paper, and so a second dressing was placed on top of the first. For a minute or two it looked as if the pilot would be unable to take us out of the barrage, let alone get us to Berlin or far-off England.

"I am sorry, Bednall," said the pilot, "I am afraid we will have to cut the party short." At that moment I did not much care what he did so long as we got away from those guns around us. Turning away from the main raiding force meant that the whole of the defences we encountered could concentrate on us alone. We started off on a lone course that took us away.

Judging by the opposition we met on the long, rambling journey home there are many gunners in the German Army who could tell the next part of our story better than I can. The flak was bad enough going out, but it was now many times worse. Everywhere we turned there seemed to be a new barrage waiting for us.

All the time the pilot was flying with one good hand and the only sound he made was to curse his "bad luck" at not being able to take S for Sugar just exactly where he had planned. The air bomber wanted to put a tourniquet above his shattered forearm, but the pilot refused this, saying it might make it impossible for him to carry on. He told someone standing beside him not to lift his eyes off him for a second.

"If I go out to it," he said, "you'll just have to shove me out of the way and take over." He must have suffered agony, as time after time the plane had to be put into violent evasive action to avoid the flak.

We were all now expecting to see any minute a stream of enemy fighters coming in to complete the "kill." The clouds, against which we were pinned like a fly on the ceiling of a room if we went beneath them, provided a magnificent background also for sighting by fighters when we were above them.

For some hours we were the only Lancaster within hundreds of miles and should have been "easy meat" for the Junkers 88 boys. The crew said afterwards it must have been the weather, causing severe icing at high altitudes, which kept them away.

At least three times on the way back we were caught in barrages as heavy as that bad one in which the captain was hit. The captain got us out of the worst of them. We seemed to gather strength the farther we went, and after a while the routine aboard went on almost as if nothing was amiss.

Occasionally one of the crew would bring up a fresh article of clothing to wrap around the pilot's arm, and then go quickly back to his job. After what seemed an eternity we finally got out once more over the North Sea with nothing more serious than a few flak-ships to cope with on the last really hazardous stage of our journey.

The closest watch, however, had to be kept for fighters until we were out beyond their maximum range. All four motors were going beautifully on a pretty full throttle, however, and, sliding down from altitude in a steady descent, we did eventually reach lovely England long before we had dared hope.

The captain landed us at our base without giving us much worse than a bit of a jolt. Only he knows just what it took out of him to do so. As we were approaching the base, the wireless operator sent a message that we

had been hit and the pilot was wounded. A fire-tender, an ambulance, and the ever-watchful doctor were waiting beside the plane as it finally came to rest at the end of its landing.

Much to everybody's surprise the captain jumped out of the aircraft almost without assistance. The doctor, however, whisked him off to hospital, and he was being operated upon within an hour of landing.

The doctor said another hour in the air would probably have found the captain helpless. As it was we had been in the air for seven hours, and for more than half that time the pilot had been flying the machine in a condition which very few would like to meet in the air, let alone over the heart of the most heavily defended country in the world.

# *In Six Hours I Shot Down Four German Raiders*

On Sunday, January 17, 1943, following the great R.A.F. raid on Berlin, the Nazis came to drop bombs on London. Wing Commander Wight-Boycott, in the air for six hours, in a Beaufighter, tells here how he shot four of the raiders out of the night sky.

THE curious thing about the first one I shot down was that although London was throwing up a terrific amount of flak and there were any number of searchlights about I don't remember seeing anything of them at all. I was looking up all the time to find the enemy silhouetted against the bright moonlit sky.

We'd just popped above a thin layer of cloud and there was the Dornier, a sort of grey colour. I fired a long burst and saw an explosion behind the pilot's cockpit. It seemed to go straight down and I tried to follow, so steeply that my observer came out of his seat. When the Dornier crashed, three brilliantly white blobs appeared to jump out of the ground. That was Dornier number one. The next patrol nothing happened at all, except my observer complaining about the hardness of his seat.

We got Dornier number two during the second alert. It must have been about four in the morning. He was travelling very fast and jinking violently. He didn't keep a straight course for more than a few seconds at a time. But there was no cloud about now; it was a good night for interception, and I managed to get in a fairly long burst. He caught fire and slowed up very quickly. I got so close to him that I was caught in his slipstream and rolled on to my back, but I managed to avoid colliding with him. By the time we were right way up again he'd hit the ground and was blazing away.

Then came Dornier number three. Again I got in a long burst amidships. There was a yellowish explosion and down he went. As he did so he fired about a second's burst, two streams of red tracer, but they went nowhere near us. Number four was a Junkers 88, and the most spectacular of the night. We found him somewhere in the Croydon area. My cannon-shells set both his engines on fire and flames spread along the wing and back to the fuselage. They lit up the sky so clearly that we could see his black crosses. And we saw four of the crew bale out, one after the other. As it went down you could see all the streets lit up, and when it hit there was a terrific flash.

Well, that was that. Four in a night. Home we went; pleased, but wondering what luck the rest of the squadron had had.

**WING CMDR. C. M. WIGHT-BOYCOTT, commanding an R.A.F night-fighter squadron, is here photographed with his observer, F/O. A. M. Sanders (left). In the accompanying text he gives a vivid description of how he brought down four of the German raiders on the night of Jan. 17, 1943. His D.S.O. was gazetted on Feb. 5.** *Photo, British Official*

# OUR DIARY OF THE WAR

***JAN. 20, 1943, Wednesday*** *1,236th day*

**Sea.**—Admiralty announced that minesweeper Bramble went down fighting on Dec. 31 in protection of convoy to Russia.

**North Africa.**—Enemy forces advanced seven miles S.W. of Pont du Fahs.

**Libya.**—Our troops occupied Homs and Tarhuna.

**Russian Front.**—Rly. centres of Proletarskaya and Nevinnomysk occupied by Soviet troops.

**Home Front.**—Daylight raid on S.E. England and London; L.C.C. school in Lewisham bombed with death-roll of 39 children and five teachers.

**General.**—Chilean Govt. broke off relations with Germany, Italy and Japan.

***JAN. 21, Thursday*** *1,237th day*

**Air.**—Venturas and Bostons raided airfields at Caen and Le Havre; Cherbourg and Flushing docks also bombed. Night raid on Ruhr.

**Russian Front.**—Soviet troops occupied Voroshilovsk (Stavropol) in Caucasus.

***JAN. 22, Friday*** *1,238th day*

**Air.**—Large-scale daylight raids on airfields and oil installations in N. France.

**Libya.**—Eighth Army occupied Castel Verde, 35 m. E. of Tripoli.

**Russian Front.**—Soviet troops occupied Salsk S.E. of Rostov and Mikoyan in Caucasus.

**Australasia.**—With mopping-up at Sanananda, Jap resistance ended in Papua.

***JAN. 23, Saturday*** *1,239th day*

**Sea.**—Admiralty announced loss of submarine Traveller.

**Air.**—U.S. Fortresses bombed Lorient and Brest by day; R.A.F. raided Lorient and W. Germany by night.

**Libya.**—Eighth Army entered Tripoli.

**Russian Front.**—Armavir, on main Caucasus rly. to Rostov, captured by Soviet troops.

**Australasia.**—U.S. air and naval forces bombarded Kolombangara Island, New Georgia. Jap aircraft raided Pt. Moresby.

***JAN. 24, Sunday*** *1,240th day*

**North Africa.**—In Tunisia enemy occupied hill E. of Ousseltia valley.

**Mediterranean.**—U.S. aircraft bombed shipping at Palermo and Messina.

**Russian Front.**—S. of Voronezh, Soviet troops occupied Starobielsk.

**Burma.**—Allied bombers attacked Rangoon, Shwebo and Akyab.

**Australasia.**—Waves of U.S. aircraft raided Munda, New Georgia.

***JAN. 25, Monday*** *1,241st day*

**Air.**—Bostons bombed Flushing docks.

**Libya.**—Our troops occupied Zauia, W. of Tripoli. Gen. Leclerc's troops reached Tripoli.

**Russian Front.**—Soviet troops occupied whole of Voronezh, from which Germans had withdrawn.

**Australasia.**—U.S. troops captured Kokumbona on Guadalcanal.

***JAN. 26, Tuesday*** *1,242nd day*

**Sea.**—Admiralty announced loss of trawler Kingston Jacinth.

**Air.**—R.A.F. again attacked Lorient by night; Bordeaux also raided.

**North Africa.**—In Tunisia Allied forces regained ground in Ousseltia valley. In raid on Algiers six enemy bombers were shot down.

**Russian Front.**—Only two small groups of German Sixth Army still holding out at Stalingrad.

**Australasia.**—Allied heavy bombers attacked Rabaul and other Jap bases.

***JAN. 27, Wednesday*** *1,243rd day*

**Air.**—U.S. bombers in England made first raid on Germany, attacking Wilhelmshaven in daylight; 22 German fighters shot down. Mosquitoes bombed shipyards at Copenhagen. Short, heavy night raid on Düsseldorf.

**Russian Front.**—Advancing from Tuapse, Soviet troops captured Apsheron on way to Maikop.

**Australasia.**—U.S. aircraft bombed Kolombangara, New Georgia.

**General.**—Announced that Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill had been in conference at Casablanca since January 14; Gen. de Gaulle and Gen. Giraud also present.

***JAN. 28, Thursday*** *1,244th day*

**Russian Front.**—Soviet troops captured Kastornaya, on Voronezh-Kursk railway.

**Australasia.**—Attacks by Allied aircraft on Jap air bases and shipping in Timor, New Britain, New Guinea and New Georgia.

**General.**—Mr. Churchill conferred with Service chiefs in Cairo.

***JAN. 29, Friday*** *1,245th day*

**Air.**—Another night raid on Lorient.

**Libya.**—In patrol operations our forward troops crossed Tunisian frontier.

**Russian Front.**—New Soviet offensive W. of Voronezh; Novy Oskol occupied; Kropotkin in N. Caucasus also captured.

**Australasia.**—Strong Jap patrols repulsed near Mubo, New Guinea.

***JAN. 30, Saturday*** *1,246th day*

**Air.**—Mosquitoes made two daylight raids on Berlin on occasion of tenth anniversary of Hitler's accession. Heavy bombers attacked Hamburg by night.

**North Africa.**—In Tunisia German tanks, infantry and artillery pushed through Faid Pass on road from Sfax.

**Mediterranean.**—U.S. Liberators made daylight raid on Messina harbour.

**Russian Front.**—In Caucasus Soviet troops captured Tikhoretsk and Maikop.

**Australasia.**—Sea and air battle began off the Solomons.

**General.**—Mr. Churchill arrived in Turkey for two-day conference with Pres. Inonu. Adm. Doenitz, U-boat chief, appointed C.-in-C. of German Navy.

***JAN. 31, Sunday*** *1,247th day*

**Sea.**—Admiralty announced loss of submarine P 222.

**Libya.**—Eighth Army occupied Zuara.

**Mediterranean.**—Allied heavy bombers again raided Messina.

**Russian Front.**—Field-Marshal Paulus and 15 generals of German Sixth Army captured at Stalingrad.

**U.S.A.**—Jap aircraft bombed U.S. shipping in W. Aleutians.

**General.**—Mr. Churchill visited Cyprus on way back from Turkey.

***FEB. 1, Monday*** *1,248th day*

**North Africa.**—U.S. counter-attacks failed to retake Faid Pass.

**Russian Front.**—Svatovo, 100 m. S.E. of Kharkov, and Zernovoy, 30 m. from Rostov, captured by Russians.

**Australasia.**—Fighting continued in Mubo-Wau area of New Guinea. U.S. troops made progress in Guadalcanal.

***FEB. 2, Tuesday*** *1,249th day*

**Air.**—In night raid on Cologne R.A.F. bombers dropped one hundred 4,000-lb. bombs in less than twenty minutes.

**Libya.**—Our troops occupied Zelten.

**Russian Front.**—All remaining German forces at Stalingrad capitulated; eight more generals captured.

**Australasia.**—Allied aircraft bombed Jap supply dumps at Kaukenau, Dutch New Guinea.

## *Flash-backs*

**1940**

February 1. *Russians launched violent attack at Summa in Mannerheim Line.*

**1941**

January 22. *Australians under Wavell entered Tobruk.*

February 1. *Agordat, Eritrea, captured by Allied troops.*

**1942**

January 21. *Rommel began to advance from El Agheila.*

January 22. *Japanese landed at Rabaul, New Britain.*

January 23. *Rommel recaptured Jedabya.*

January 25. *Japanese landed at Lae, New Guinea.*

January 26. *American troops landed in Northern Ireland.*

January 29. *Rommel recaptured Benghazi.*

January 30. *British forces withdrew from the mainland of Malaya to Singapore Island.*

# Editor's Postscript

A CORRESPONDENT of mine writing from Port Said tells me that he has been subscribing to THE WAR ILLUSTRATED since No. 1, and that, despite the fact of his newsagent being bombed out in one of the raids on that town, he has been able to gather a complete series up to the time of his writing, when No. 124 had arrived, which is pretty good going. I am interested to know that some of the newspapers published in Egypt make frequent use of our articles without acknowledgement, which is, of course, a reprehensible practice in journalism; but as the first concern of us all is the winning of the War, we can afford to ignore such informalities, and I am sure that the Egyptian papers are helping in that direction, even when they quote THE WAR ILLUSTRATED without acknowledging the source of their information. All the same, one would prefer an occasional "credit title," as the film producers and their many associates ever eager for their individual efforts to be recognized, phrase it.

AMONG the letters on my desk the other morning was one of New Year's greeting from the Royal Norwegian Government. It was stamped with the first Norwegian postage stamps to be issued by the Norwegian Government since its temporary departure from Norwegian soil on June 7, 1940, and was mailed from Free Norwegian territory—in other words, it was posted on the high seas on one of the more than seven hundred vessels belonging to the Norwegian Mercantile Marine which, in spite of severe losses, are continuing to transport men, munitions and food in the service of the United Nations. The stamps form a series of six, and together they provide a symbolic representation of Norway's fight against the German invader. Each of them bears the symbol "H 7" surmounted by the royal crown—a symbol which has been chosen by the Norwegians in Norway to demonstrate their continued loyalty to King Haakon VII and to the fight for freedom and independence which he personifies. Specially interesting is the 20-öre stamp which shows the Norwegian home front slogan *Vi Vil Vinne* (we will win)—Norway's adaptation of the V-sign—painted on a Norwegian country road. All of us will echo most heartily the Norwegian Government's wish "that in the year 1943 it may prove possible to transform *Vi Vil Vinne* into *Vi Vant* (we have won)."

ONE day in mid-August last year Wing-Commander A. B. Austin, who had already achieved some distinction with his book Fighter Command, received a single ticket from London to a place on the south coast and the brief summons: "Waterloo Station tomorrow at 0900 hours. Bring one suit of battledress and the minimum of luggage. Tin hat and gas-mask, of course." That was the beginning of days of arduous and frequently dangerous adventure. It hardly needs to be said that that adventure was the combined attack on Dieppe, and what took place on that long-to-be-remembered August 19 has been described by none more vividly than Mr. Austin, who represented ten national newspapers on that historic occasion. In our own pages we quoted some passages of brilliant narrative from his story of the Commando attack on the German positions above the cliffs west of Dieppe. (*See* page 197.) Now Mr. Austin has written a much fuller account. In We Landed at Dawn (Gollancz, 7s. 6d.) he describes not only the events on the day of battle, but tells something of the long preparations, of the Canadian soldiers he came to know, of many a deed of heroism, of many an incident touched with humour.

**CPL. J. A. FRENCH, of the Australian Infantry, to whom the posthumous award of the V.C. was announced on Jan. 14, 1943. He destroyed 3 Jap machine-gun posts at Milne Bay, Papua, last September, but was killed after he had silenced the third post.**
*Photo, Planet News*

MANY a reader will be amused, and not a little moved, by his story of the concert on board ship as they crossed the Channel on the eve of their desperate adventure: of the Rabelaisian monologue, of the Canadian soldier singing The Road to Mandalay, and the sailor who obliged with Round Her Knee She Wore a Purple Garter, after which an A.B. rendered The Longshoreman in an Edwardian voice (whatever that is)—of the petty officer who in a most remarkable strip-tease act gave an impression of "a young lady, a very young lady, very tasty, very sweet, getting into, and having her bath . . . 'Gee, don't he know a lot,' murmured a boy behind me from Toronto." It is this spirit that the "foreigner" finds it so difficult to understand; the spirit that is so typically—English, British, whatever adjective you like to select to include that strange race of beings who are ourselves.

BUT then so much that we do must amuse those who are not of our lineage and language. That debate in the House of Lords the other day, for instance—the one initiated by Lord Brabazon, who, having done his job of work at the Ministry of Aircraft Production, is now concerned with the importance of phonetics in democratic education. Strange that we should find time for such things in the midst of the greatest war in history! And yet not so strange, since so many people profess to be able to fight better if they have a promise of something better to fight for. Lord Brabazon emphasized his point by drawing a delightful little picture of Lord Simon and Lord Cranborne, dressed in sweaters and corduroys, chatting with the "locals" in a pub in Wapping. In three minutes, he said, the people would be calling Lord Simon "sir," not because he knew more about racing and football than they did, but because his voice was different: it was a cultivated voice. But Lord Brabazon was not at all pleased that this should be so, since in his view the working classes are kept down because they do not speak with the same accent as the professional classes. So he urged that all extreme types of English should be "jumped on" in early life.

LORD STRABOLGI disagreed; he put in a plea for the provincial and local dialects. Even Lord Simon, who must have smiled at the story of his imaginary visit to the riverside hostelry, thought that a vast amount is added to the value and effectiveness of human conversation if certain varieties in speech, derived from the area from which people came, should be preserved. The school must never dream of despising or denouncing local habits, manners, and modes of speech, he declared, although at the same time it must use its influence to discourage mere mumbling, slovenly and down-trodden language. As for the Oxford accent, the Lord Chancellor considered it has no more to do with Oxford than the Oxford Group. "Announcers do admirably," he went on; "but my own experience is sometimes that when I turn on the wireless to hear the news I am compelled to listen to backchat between performers who, I understand, are technically known as 'comics,' by whom the English tongue is debased almost beyond recognition. Sometimes one has to endure noises produced by the human voice which certainly are neither music nor even in tune. The technical name for these noises is 'hot rhythm.' I cannot see why we should have to endure it. There ought to be a close season for such performances." But for my part, I am not at all sure that the "comics" are any more debasing than those mouthers and mumblers whose names the placards outside the theatres print in the biggest letters that the stars of the stage can command.

YET again I have to greet the publication of another Stationery Office publication. This time it is The Battle of Egypt, which has been prepared for the War Office by the Ministry of Information, and costs but 7d. In its 32 large pages there are 80 excellent photographs, many of them published for the first time, taken by the Staff of No. 1 Army Film and Photo Section, attached to the Public Relations services in the Middle East. There is also a double-spread diagrammatic map in two colours, illustrating the course of the great battle which decided the fate of the Italian Empire in North Africa.

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